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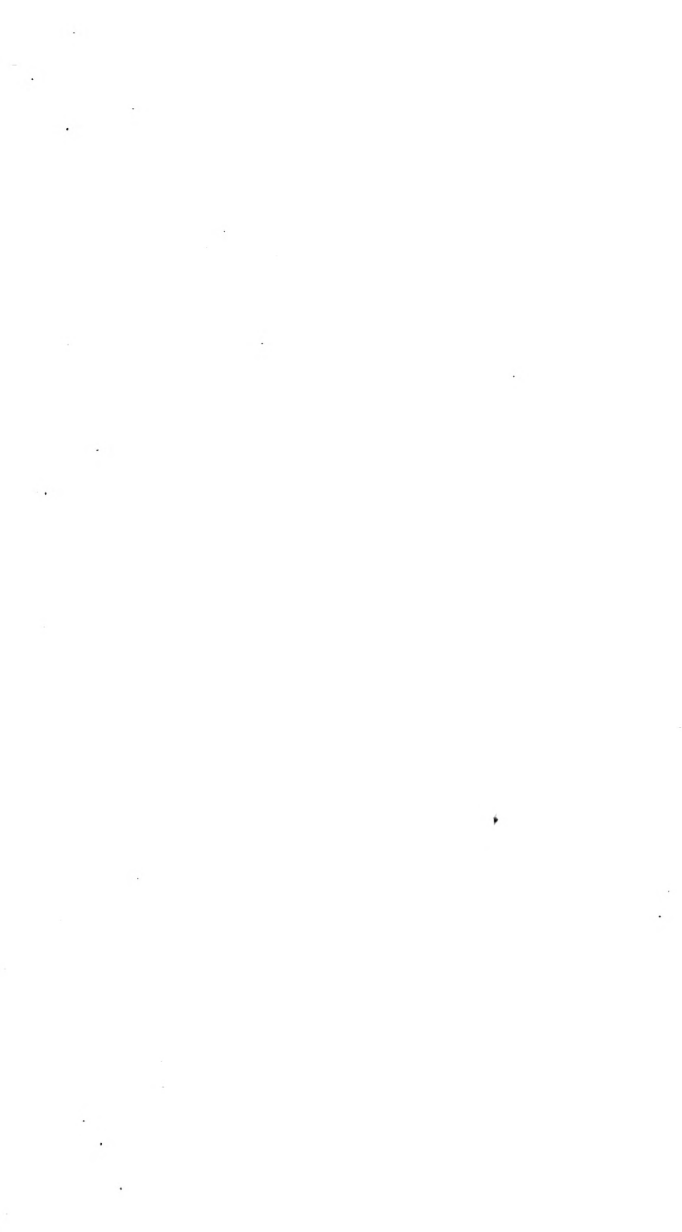
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MELCOMBE LODGE ;

OR,

Traits of Family Pride!

A NOVEL,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY A LADY.

“ The nightingale may claim the topmost bough,
“ Whilst the poor grasshopper must chirp below :
“ Like him, unnotic'd, I, and such as I,
“ Spread little wings, and rather skip than fly.”

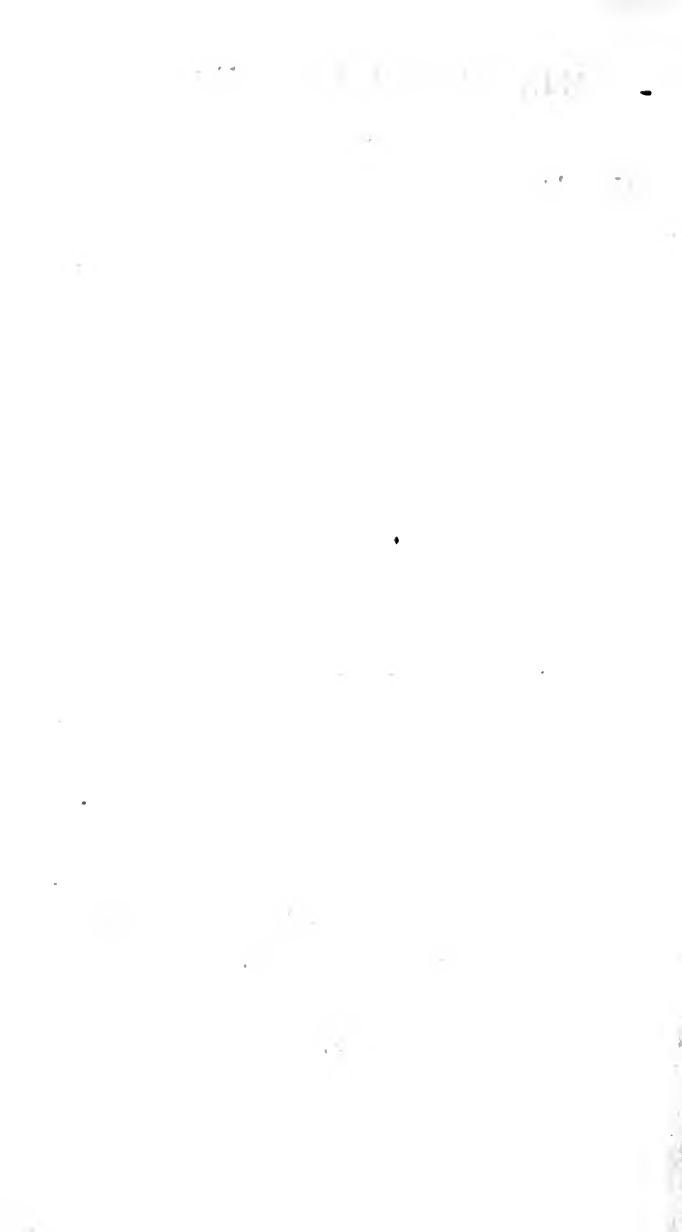
VOL. IV.

LYNN :

Printed by and for W. Whittingham,

AND PUBLISHED BY BALDWIN, CRADOCK,
AND JOY, LONDON.

1819.



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Melcombe Lodge.

CHAPTER I.



Lady Caroline with Sophia's assistance, finished her wreaths of flowers the next evening ; her brother and his friends were engaged by her, to lend their aid in disposing them to the greatest advantage, around the pillars, and walls of the temporary ball room. Sophia's taste here shone conspicuous ; which Lord Edgell observing, proposed she should be the designer and the rest of the party work under her directions. Unwilling to be thus distinguished,

Sophia laughingly excused herself; but Lady Lucretia, and Caroline seconding the proposal of their brother, she was at length induced, though with some difficulty, to comply with their united entreaties, and accordingly under her super-intendance, the whole was completed.

The day before the intended fête, Lord Deresford made his appearance. Having escaped from the party at Brighton, with whom minutes seemed hours, he had hastened to Longueville with as much expedition, as a chaise and four horses could carry him.

Sophia welcomed him with as much cordiality as she could assume, without giving encouragement to hopes, it was evident to every one, he still entertained. As usual Lord Deresford, devoted himself entirely to her; every man who approached her, he felt disposed to challenge: and

finding the hand, he solicited for the first part of the ensuing evening, was promised to another ; it was with difficulty, he could refrain from reproaching her, for not having reserved it for him.

The day following, a dinner in the park, was to be given to the tenants of the Marquis, and the poorer inhabitants of the village, and Sophia having promised to open the ball the same evening with Lord Edgell, the Viscount began seriously to apprehend, a powerful rival had started up in this elegant young nobleman : and determined no longer to continue in his present suspense, he resolved to end it before the dawn of the succeeding day.

Captain Rushbrook had been under the necessity of repairing again to Town, on professional business ; and from thence it was his intention to join his sister and her

family at Glenmore. George was his Uncle's companion to London, and only returned to Longueville the morning of the fête.

The company began to assemble between nine and ten ; the evening was fine, and the innumerable gas-lights, interspersed with coloured lamps, about the grounds, gave to the scene the brilliancy of day.

The invisible band of musicians playing a most beautiful air of Mozart's, soon attracted the greater part of the guests to the avenue : which was at such a distance from the ball room, as not to disturb the dancers.

In compliment to their brother, the Ladies Lucretia and Caroline, were this night more than usually elegantly dressed : and Sophia, by their request appeared in a dress exactly similar. Lady Caroline

pointed out her friend as the fair architect, to those, who, on their entering the Pavilion, erected for the dance, expressed their admiration of the fairy bower, and upon Lord Edgell's advancing to claim her for his partner, and leading her to her place at the top of the set, many of the titled belles in secret, envied her the attention of the elegant heir of Longueville, to whom, it was buzzed around, Sophia was soon to be united.

No one felt more envious of her being thus distinguished, than the Miss Fitzarthur's, who were at that time visiting a family in the neighbourhood, and had, of course, been included in the invitation, which was sent to it.

Six months since, "observed the elder sister, to a lady near her, we were told Lord d'Arcy, was the favored man; after that we had heard Lord Deresford, and-

now it appears, Miss De Clairville prefers the heir of a Marquisate to either."

"And can you blame her for this?" returned a gentleman at her elbow, who had overheard this remark. "Dear Mr. Monthermer is it you?" cried Miss Fitzarther brightening, as the hopes of a partner rose to her view, "I little expected the pleasure of meeting you here?"

Mr. Monthermer answered the young lady, with his usual low bow, and finding it was expected from him to dance one set, in the course of the evening, he offered to lead Miss Fitzarther to that, which was then forming, to which she readily consented.

"Who is Lady Caroline dancing with?" enquired Miss Fitzarther of her partner, as the former was following Sophia and sister down the dance. "I never saw a

handsomer man," she continued, "and cannot think where he comes from."

"If you are particular anxious to discover this," replied Mr. Monthermer drily, "I will beg Mr. Cecil to gratify your curiosity in a trice."

"His name is Cecil then," "and his family—"

"That, you must, as I said before," said Mr. Monthermer laughing "learn from himself. I was satisfied, I confess to you, with the knowledge of his name, and never thought of enquiring that of his great grand father."

"He is a man of some consequence, I must believe", said Miss Fitzarther, "or Lady Caroline would not have danced with him, and I should have no objection, I acknowledge to his being introduced to me."

Lady Caroline the next moment, turning Mr. Monthermer in the dance, gave him an opportunity of mentioning to her, his partner's wish, for an introduction to Mr. Cecil. She laughingly promised to make him acquainted with it, but said, as he was engaged to her sister, the following set, and to Sophia the one after it, she was apprehensive Miss Fitzarthur must not hope, to succeed in obtaining him for a partner till very late in the evening.

When the dance was concluded, Lady Caroline imparted to Mr. Cecil, the honor Miss Fitzarthur had done him, in expressing a wish for his being introduced to her. "Lucretia," she proceeded to say, "will I know yield her claim to your hand, if you feel disposed, to take advantage of your good fortune, in having attracted the attention of this fashionable belle."

"And who is this Miss Fitzarthur?" en-

quired Mr. Cecil laughing, "that has conferred this honor upon me?"

"The elder of two sisters, who may easily be distinguished, by the idolatry they pay to the shrine of fashion. Miss Fitzarthur is now dancing with my friend Monthermer."

"Pardon me, then," he gravely replied, "if I decline the honor, that lady intended to confer on me; if she is Miss Fitzarther. Her being here, assures me the young lady is of respectable character, but had I met her in other company, I confess, I should have had my doubts on the subject."

Lady Caroline felt herself colour at this remark of Mr. Cecil. The Miss Fitzarthurs, were that evening more than usually indelicate, in the openness of their dress; but she thought, he ought not to have hint-

ed at this before her: and that gentleman with pain observed, he had been hurting the delicacy of one woman, at the moment his strict ideas of female decorum, had hurried him into expressing his disapprobation of the indelicacy of another.

They were both silent a few minutes. Lady Caroline first recovered herself; and anxious to divert the attention of her companion from the Miss Fitzarthurs, by turning it upon Sophia, whose chastely costyle of dress, was a pleasing contrast to their's, said, "How very handsome my brother's partner looks this evening."

"Miss de Clairville is indeed a lovely young woman," observed Mr. Cecil, breaking silence: "and I suspect my friend already feels the power of her charms."

"May your conjectures be right," returned Lady Caroline, "as there is no-

thing that would give me half the satisfaction I should feel, at seeing Sophia the wife of dear Seymour."

"There is I think every prospect of your happiness being made complete," said Mr. Cecil, smiling at the warmth, with which she had expressed herself on the occasion." "Miss De Clairville appears to me exactly the character, to captivate your brother."

"And his friend also, I suspect," returned Lady Caroline a little archly.

"It is not utterly impossible," he replied smiling. "I might have run some hazard of losing my heart to such powerful attractions, had I met Miss De Clairville before, I had the happiness of becoming acquainted with her friend."

"And that friend," said Lady Caroline

turning aside her blushing face, is in every respect so infinitely her superior in *mental*, as well as personal charms : I am not surprised at the preference you have given her.

Mr. Cecil was prevented making any reply to this speech, by the approach of Mr. Monthermur ; who came he said, to learn from Lady Caroline, if she had yet prepared her partner for the high honor intended him by Miss Fitzarthur.

“ Mr. Cecil is, I believe, engaged to my sister for the next set,” she replied.

Oh ! if that alone prevents his profiting by the unexampled condescension of my late partner, returned Mr. Monthermer. “ I shall be most happy to supply his place to Lady Lucretia ; and for old acquaintance sake, I know she will not refuse to dance with me.”

Mr. Cecil finding he could not shrink the undesired honor of an introduction to Miss Fitzarthur, submitted with a better grace, than Lady Caroline expected, to the proposed exchange of partners. But before he followed Mr. Monthermer to that part of the room, where the Lady was waiting in full expectation of his approach, he prevailed upon Lady Caroline to reserve herself for him at the supper set.

Lord Deresford in the mean time, excusing himself, from joining the dancers, sat watching with jealous eyes, every movement of Sophia and Lord Edgell; and mistaking the pleasure, with which the former attended to her partners remarks, as proofs of a rising attachment, his feelings rose almost to agony; and unable longer to controul them, he hastened from the ball-room, and wandered for some time about the grounds, that were at the greatest distance from the festive scene.

In returning towards the Pavilion, he saw the company preparing to leave it : and the next moment discovered Sophia, led by Lord Edgell, advancing towards him. They were, with others of their party proceeding to the conservatory, and Lord Deresford stepping on one side, heard Lord Edgell enquiring of Sophia, if she knew what had become of him, and on her answering in the negative, he continued, "If we do not find him in the supper room, I will return to seek him in the house: he is not well, I am sure, or he would not have refused to join the dancers." The Viscount did not hear the reply of Sophia, but quickening his pace he overtook the pair, before they arrived at the conservatory. To Lord Edgell's enquiry where he had concealed himself, he answered, that finding the heat of the Ball-room very oppressive, he left it and adjourned to the avenue, where a great part of the company had been promenading ; and

then finding his rival was under the necessity of leaving his partner, to attend to his other guests; he took advantage of his absence to engage her to dance with him after supper; and felt evidently much gratified, by her cheerfully assenting to become his partner at that time.

The band removed to the lawn before the conservatory, and played some popular airs during supper; after which it was proposed by the company in general, to take advantage of so beautiful a night, in wandering about the grounds, in preference to returning to the Pavilion.

Lord Edgell, who was engaged to dance with a disagreeable woman of quality, happy to find himself excused from his unpleasant task, by the alteration in the plan, for the remaining part of the evening, returned to Sophia, and Lord Deresford had the mortification of being disappointed in hav-

ing her for his partner, but the additional one of finding Lord Edgell's arm taken by her, before he had time to offer his own.

The servants returning with cloaks and shawls, which Lord Edgell had sent for to the house, apprehensive his sisters and their friend, were not sufficiently guarded against the night air; the party in a few minutes afterwards, descended to the lawn, and directed their steps to the avenue, continued some time promenading it.

Mr. Monthermur, appeared gratified at meeting Sophia again. He told her, his friend Marden was so constant a visitor in Seymour street, that he expected nothing else, than hearing of his soon commencing benedict. That Eliza's affectation had almost entirely vanished, and her harp, on which she could not play, had been some time laid aside for the piano, upon which she was a very fair performer. In short

so striking was the alteration that had taken place, in little more than three months ; it could alone be ascribed to the little God, who changes the gay to the serious, and *visa versa*, as the humour pleases him.

“ The Major, and his little wife,” continued Mr. Monthermur, “ Are, with the metamorphosed fair one, going to pass a few weeks at Weymouth, whither Marsden accompanies them. And now, that I have given you all these particulars of your friends, my dear Miss De Clairville,” he proceeded, “ Suffer me to enquire what you have been doing with yourself, since I had last the happiness of seeing you in London ? ”

Sophia was going to reply, as the Marquis approached, who advised them to make good their retreat, as expeditiously as possible, as the clouds had put on a most tremendous appearance and threaten-

ed a violent storm. The thickness of the foliage had alone prevented their discovering this before, but the pattering of the rain upon the leaves, was now perfectly distinguished by all. Lord Edge!l had been called away, but both Lord Deresford and Mr. Monthermur, offered their assistance, in seeing Sophia to a place of shelter. The rain, at length began to penetrate through the trees, and Lady Caroline calling out, "To the hermitage," proceeded in that direction, with Mr. Cecil; Lord Deresford observing Sophia hesitated in her choice of a conductor, forcibly drew her arm within his, and hurried her forward in the track, her friend appeared to be advancing in. But on arriving at the hermitage, it was evident Lady Caroline had not taken shelter there, as it was without inhabitants. Supposing she had proceeded to the conservatory, Sophia proposed following her thither, but the rain was now falling in torrents, and her companion prevailed up-

on her to continue where she was, till its violence had a little abated.

Unwillingly she consented to this, for her situation was peculiarly awkward; every moment expecting to be addressed on a subject, which, it was evident, Lord Deresford only waited for an opportunity to commence. Once, or twice she addressed some trifling remark to him, but sunk in a deep reverie, the Viscount appeared not to hear her. Tired at length, of her fruitless endeavours to obtain his attention, she continued as silent as himself, eagerly watching for the first favourable minute to make her escape; but the rain still continued too violent, to permit her leaving the hermitage.

Seeing no hope of its clearing that night, Sophia, wrapping her cloak round her, declared her intention of braving the storm, rather than continue any longer exposed

to the chilling atmosphere of their present apartment, and was putting her design into execution, by hurrying forward, when her companion, who had been leaning against the entrance of the little building, lost to every thing around, observing her intention gently drew her back, and apologising for his absent fit, he implored her not to think of returning to the house, till the violence of the storm had a little subsided, and leading her to a rustic bench a little within the apartment, he seated himself beside her, and after a pause of a few seconds, in which it was evident he was struggling with some powerful emotion, he said, "This is an opportunity my dear Miss De Clairville, I have long sought in vain, for addressing you on a subject, which has been uppermost in my thoughts for some months, I may indeed say, since the day, you first honoured the Priory by your presence. From you," he continued, "I look for sincerity. Will you then

candidly inform me, whether your affections are still disengaged ? ”

Sophia was not prepared for this question ; she trembled excessively, and scarcely knew how to support herself. Lord Deresford was aware of her emotion, and dreading to hear it was occasioned by unwillingness, to confess her heart was Lord Edgell's, waited in agitation equal to her own, the termination of this silence.

Finding she was expected to speak, after some little hesitation she said, “ And may I my lord, request to learn the occasion of your putting this question to me ? ”

“ Surely,” he answered, “ it needs no explanation. You must my dear Miss De Clairville, have long been aware of the influence you have obtained, and that on you alone depends my every hope of happiness. Almost from the first day we met, my heart

became your captive, and I was on the point of declaring my attachment to you, as Lord d'Arcy made his appearance at the Marchioness of D—'s. From something, Lady Caroline then said, I was led to believe he was my rival, my favoured rival ; and in an agony of mind, it would be impossible for me to discribe, I hurried from the house, and the next morning left London, with the resolution of forgetting there was such a being in existence as yourself. But whilst wandering, I scarcely knew whether a newspaper informed me, that he, whom I dreaded soon to hear, was the husband of Sophia De Clairville ; was in Paris, where it was expected his family would join him, and that the whole party were immediately to cross the Alps, and might be absent from this country many months. I instantly wrote to my elder sister to learn the truth of these particulars, and soon received from her a confirmation of the report. The indisposition of Maria," he proceeded,

“ alone prevented my design of following you to Clifton ; but hearing you were once more at Melcombe, I hastened with my sisters to the Priory, where, I flattered myself, as I still had the happiness of finding you free, that the opportunities which would then be offered me, by the frequent intercourse of our families, I might at length be able to make that impression on your heart, I so earnestly wished.”

From Brighton I followed you hither, your reception was almost all I could wish. But, I had not been many hours at Longuiville, before I saw, or fancied I saw, you preferred another to me. The pain, this gave me, I will not attempt to describe, and I now most earnestly entreat you, my dear Miss De Clairville to pronounce my doom; suspence being of all evils the worst to be born.”

Here Lord Deresford paused, and So-

phia feeling acutely the pain, she was going to inflict, for a few minutes felt unable to answer him; till recollecting the longer she remained silent, the more difficulty she would find in speaking, at length said: "I would not willingly my lord, keep you a moment unnecessarily in suspense. The affection with which you have honoured me I beg leave to express my sense of: but ——" she hesitated.

"You cannot return it: for you love another, and Edgell is the man." Lord Deresford, as he said this, rose hastily, but instantly re-seating himself, continued. "And am I Sophia to understand you resign me, for the acquaintance of a day."

Sophia felt too much for the present irritable feelings, her rejection had called forth, to be angry at the Viscounts unceremonious address, or at the question he had put to her. But wishing him rather to fix

his suspicions on Lord Edgell, than on his cousin, she remained silent ; which he believing was occasioned by her feeling conscious, she loved the former, he would not press for a confirmation of his suspicions, and consequently continued in the error of her affections being in the possession of Lord Edgell.

At length Lord Deresford, assuming as much composure as he could command, said, “ After what has passed, I can no longer bear to remain at Longueville. Tomorrow will find me on my return to the Priory, and I will now take my leave of Miss De Clairville ; probably,” he added with a melancholy smile, “ under that appellation for ever ! ”

Sophia wished to have spoken, but she knew not what to say, and observing the lamps, which hung around the little apart-

ment, were beginning to grow dim, she arose, and was followed by Lord Deresford to the door, when taking her hand, he raised it for an instant to his lips, and in a voice almost inarticulate from emotion, said as he released it, "May you be happy ! and should we ever meet again—"

"May you my lord," she answered in a tone, that evinced how much she felt for his distress. "Have recovered that tranquility, your unfortunate attachment to me has for a time, deprived you of." She then hastened forwards, Lord Deresford, slowly following her.

Lady Caroline, on missing Sophia, had dispatched several of the servants in quest of her; and now seeing her enter from the lawn, she hastened to enquire from whence she had come, and where she had been all that time. Upon hearing she was now arrived from the hermitage, where she had

fully expected to have found her ladyship, Lady Caroline said, "I certainly did intend taking shelter there, but Mr. Cecil, fancying it must be damp, would not allow of my entering it, but hastened with me to the house. I hope my dear Sophia," she added, "you will not suffer from having been detained there so long. But where is Lord Deresford, under whose escort, Mr Monthurmer told me, you had left the avenue?"

Sophia answered, she believed, he was not far off, and the next moment he made his appearance ; but looking so internally wretched, that Lady Caroline guessing in part, what had occasioned it, felt too much compassion for his present feelings, to rally him upon his looking so exact a resemblance of a discarded lover ; but went to seek Mrs. De Clairville, to whom she related her fears of Sophia's having run a

hazard of a violent cold, from being so long exposed to the damps of the evening.

Mrs. De Clairville, considerably alarmed, hastened to her daughter, and remarking her pallid countenance, which she attributed to her having caught a violent fever, hurried her instantly to bed. Whilst Margaret by her Mistress's order, was preparing a warm drink, for her young lady, the latter had an opportunity of relating to her mother, the scene that had just passed in the hermitage. Mrs. De Clairville sighed as she saw how fallacious had been the hopes, which her husband had been entertaining of seeing their Sophia the wife of the Viscount. But hiding her own disappointment, she made her daughter happy, by approving her conduct on the late occasion ; and after seeing her take some whey, she affectionately kissed her and retired. Sophia, soon after her mother and

Margaret quitted her, fell into a quiet slumber, from which she did not awake till a later hour than usual, the following morning.

CHAP. II.



Mrs. De Clairville hastened to her daughter's apartment, the instant she was dressed ; and had the pleasure of finding her rising, apparently well, with the exception only of a little hoarseness.

Mr. De Clairville had been made acquainted with his daughter's dismissal of Lord Deresford, but was satisfied that she could not have acted otherwise, situated as she at present was with Lord d'Arcy, he yet

suffered himself to indulge the hope, that when her engagement with him was dissolved, she would feel no repugnance to enter into others with his cousin.

Lord Deresford's abrupt departure occasioned great surprize to the family. Lady Caroline alone suspected the occasion of it, and argued it, favorable to her hopes of seeing Sophia, some day or other, the wife of her brother.

A large party were that morning assembled at the breakfast table, amongst whom, were the Miss Fitzarthers.

Miss Fitzarther, mortified at the little impression which her charms had made on Mr. Cecil, the last evening ; now turned her attention on Edward De Clairville ; whom, she declared, she thought infinitely handsomer, and believing from his sauvity of manners to her sex in general, he was

not the insensible being, Mr. Cecil was, she determined upon making an entire conquest of him, before the day was over; and Sophia, on entering the breakfast-room, found her practising upon her brother the same airs and graces, she had made use of the night before, to attract Mr. Cecil.

Miss Fitzarthur, she knew was not the woman to captivate Edward, had there been no Emily Rushbrook in existence; she therefore felt a little angry with him, for encouraging the absurdities of the former, which instead of disgusting, appeared to amuse him.

Lady Caroline, the moment she saw Sophia enter, called to her to take her usual place next her, but the Marquis desiring his daughter not to be so great a monopolizer, invited his young favourite to take the seat between him and his son. Her voice in answering his enquiries after her

health, betrayed, she had not entirely escaped the damps of the last evening, and in an instant, she was assailed from all quarters, with recipes for her hoarseness.

“ I hope, Lord Deresford has not been an equal sufferer, with Miss De Clairville,” said Miss Louisa Fitzarther. “ I observed they entered from the Lawn, about the same time last night, and concluded they had been mutually in danger.

“ One, I suspect to have suffered considerably more than the other,” said Lady Caroline, as she looked significantly towards Sophia. “ Miss De Clairville is happy, in having only a little hoarseness to complain of. His lordship I doubt—”

“ You do not mean to insinuate I hope,” said her father, “ Lord Deresford has been a material sufferer from having been

caught in a shower. Had this been the case, he would not, I should think, have left Longueville at so early an hour this morning."

"Indeed Papa," returned Lady Caroline, "I was never more correct, than in what I was going to observe, when you interrupted me; and if your fair neighbour could be prevailed upon to be ingenious for once, she would tell you, I was going to assert nothing but what was true."

The Marquis turning to Sophia for an explanation, her blushing cheek and down-cast eye, instantly solved the mystery; and feeling for the confusion his daughter had occasioned her, he tried to lessen it, by changing the subject of conversation.

The day promised to be very fine; and as soon as breakfast was over; the whole party adjourned to the spot, where prepa-

rations were already commencing for the dinner.

“And are we expected,” cried Miss Louisa Fitzarthur; “to sit at table with the raffle? I am surprized the Marquis should think of proposing such a thing”!

“If you are so much averse to the plan,” returned George De Clairville, to whom this speech was addressed. “I would advise your confining yourself to your own apartment, where not even the smell of the beef or puddings can reach your delicate nerves. For my own part,” he added, “I have no such dread of inhaling it, on the contrary, I feel every possible inclination to partake of the roast and boiled, which are destined this day to fill the tables, now preparing to receive so many excellent dishes.”

“You mistake me Mr. De Clairville,”

said Miss Louisa ; “ If you think I wish to deny myself the pleasure of being an eye witness of the scene. I have not the least objection to looking on ; we did the same at home, when Papa gave a dinner to the Poor, at Delamere, in celebration of Peace. But then, after the poor people had dined, we, with our other guests, partook of more delicate fare within doors.”

“ And pray,” said George, “ do you think your poor neighbours felt any great gratification from your observations on them, whilst they were eating ? I suspect not. To day,” he continued, “ you will remark the pleasure, which will be afforded the poor around Longueville, from their patron and his family sitting down indiscriminately with the lowest of them. But here comes Lord Edgell, tell him your scruples on this occasion, and depend upon it, he will take care to see you accommodated to your satisfaction within the house.”

“We cannot spare you George, not even to this fair lady,” said his Lordship, as he approached. “Your services, where never in more request than at this moment.”

“I am happy to hear it,” he returned; and glad to escape from Miss Louisa Fitz-arthur, he ran off, leaving Lord Edgell to apologize to the young lady, for sending away her beau.

Ja

Louisa, now all smiles and good humour, requested to know, if her services would be accepted; for nothing, she professed, would give her so much pleasure, as making herself useful, at such a time as the present.

Lord Edgell thanking her, said his sisters would be gratified in having such an auxiliary; and offered to conduct her to them. Louisa would have preferred putting herself under the direction of the brother, but finding her wish could not be

accomplished, she made a merit of necessity, and exerted herself so much in the course of the day, that George could scarcely believe she had been in earnest in what she had said to him at the commencement of it.

The Marquis sat at the head of the first table, with Mrs. De Clairville on his right hand. At the second Lord Edgell presided ; at which Edgard acted as vice-president, and had the unspeakable happiness of having the elder Miss Fitzarthur for his nearest neighbour, who this day, contrary to her usual practice, preferred the lower place at the festive board, to one at the upper end.

Sophia was now seen in a new light by the Marquis and his family. This was a scene calculated to delight her, and into which, she entered with the greatest spirit. Every unpleasant recollection was forgot,

and she appeared the same character, that was wont by its unaffected gaiety, to delight the hearts of all her friends.

Lord Edgell found her an able assistant in attending to the wants of all around him. To the women, who had children in their arms, she paid the most attention; and relieved more than one mother, by nursing their infants whilst they were dining. Lady Caroline was not so much engaged but she had leisure to remark the approving looks of her brother, as they were turned upon his fair neighbour. "All thought she, is going on as I could wish." Indeed, she was not the only one present, who observed the evident admiration Lord Edgell's manner to Sophia evinced, whilst she unconscious of the conjectures it had called forth, continued to employ herself, as she had begun.

Lousia Fitzarthur observing with some

displeasure, the admiration Sophia had attracted from almost all present, by her unaffected kindness to those around her, endeavoured to divert some portion of it to herself. For this end, she snatched a child of eight or nine months old from its mother, and began tossing it about : but the little creature already beginning to distinguish one person from another, and not at all approving being handled so roughly by a stranger, set up a note so shrill and piercing, that annoyed at the discordance of it; Lousio in a great pet, threw it back to its mother ; who not pleased at her child's having been treated so unceremoniously, even by a great lady, remarked to her next neighbour, in no very low key, how different the handsome young lady at the top of the table, would have behaved under similar circumstances, " who seemed," she said, " to be as fond of other people's children, as if they were her own, God bless her !"

Lady Caroline smiled as she overheard this remark, and saw the effect it produced on Lousia, who, colouring violently, returned to her seat, nor offered to leave it again till the tables were cleared.

The first opportunity, the former found, of speaking to her brother, she related the scene that had lately passed.

“The women was right,” returned Lord Edgell, “Indeed, I never saw in England, a better nurse, or right feeling and every feminine virtue, evinced than your friend, this day.”

“Nor in any other county I suspect,” said his sister.

Lord Edgell after a short pause suddenly exclaimed, Caroline, where is Lord d’Arcy at this time ?”

“At the Antipodes I hope,” she returned

laughing." But what could possibly remind you of him, I am sure we do not want him here."

"You may not," said her brother smiling. But are you my dear sister, assured there is no other person present who would not be rejoiced to see him again."

"If you allude to Sophia," she replied, "I may safely answer you, she would not, I am quite certain, she continued with earnestness, she does not now care about Lord d'Arcy, whatever she might once have done."

"And may I ask," said Lord Edgell, much amused by his sisters earnestness, "how you have ascertained this?"

"A thousand ways. In the first place, Sophia never speaks of him."

Lord Edgell shook his head.

“Secondly. she is pretty certain, even if she entertained the same sentiments in his favor which I do not deny her having once done, that Lord Montreuil will never consent to his son’s union with her :] and thirdly, because we know very well, the Earl would not have taken his family into Italy, had it not been for his design to marry Lord d’Arcy, to the daughter of his old friend.”

“The reasons you have assigned are certainly very ingenious, my dear Caroline,” said her brother. But if they are the only ones you can advance, to induce me to believe your friend no longer entertains any regard for Lord d’Arcy, I confess to you they are not sufficiently satisfactory to me, to banish the impression, I have received of a mutual attachment subsisting between the parties. But we will now return to our guests.

The tables had been some time cleared, and the female part of the company were regaling with tea, as Lord Edgell and his sister rejoined them.

The former remained some minutes to contemplate so pleasing a scene, whilst Lady Caroline ran forward to join her sister and Sophia. It reminded him of many similar ones, he had witnessed on the continent. A few yards from him, he observed an ancient couple, whose healthy appearance particularly struck him, and advancing towards them, he entered into conversation with the man, whom he never recollected having seen before. On further enquiry, Lord Edgell learned, he was not an inhabitant of S—, the village in which Longueville house was situated; but was at that time, with his wife on a visit to their grandchildren, who had lately settled there.

“There is our dear boy, my Lord,” cri-

ed the old man, pointed to a young one, who was sitting next a very pretty girl, not far off. "He was in a french prison," he proceeded, "several years. A gentleman however happily took a great fancy to him, and obtained leave of the Emperor, to employ him about his own person, and, when he went into Italy, with some difficulty persuaded Bonaparte to consent, to his taking Thomas with him. It was there the lad met with his present wife, who was servant, he tells me to a beautiful young creature living there. She was very loth to part with Flora, but finding her intended husband was an Englishman, she said, God bless her ! she could not refuse giving her consent to her marrying him, as she loved all the English ; and so Flora says, she has heard, her mother did before her."

"Can you, my good friend, recollect the name of Flora's mistress?" enquired Lord Edgell, who had attended with a more than

usual degree of interest to the old man's tale.

“Flora shall tell your Lordship herself,” he returned. “For to say the truth, I cannot speak such queer names.” He then made a sign to the young woman his son was sitting by, which was instantly attended to. “My dear,” he cried, as his grand daughter approached, “His Lordship wishes to know the name of your young lady; and as I could not inform him, I called for you to tell him.”

Flora advanced a few steps nearer, and curtsying very low, answered in Italian, “The name of my beloved mistress my Lord, is Lady Laurina di Rosalvi,” and then making another curtsey, she was retiring, when Lord Edgell called her back, and for a short time continued to question her in native language, which created great surprise in the by standers. Remarking this

he desisted ; and desired her in English, to send her husband to him the next morning, and then turning to her grand-father, he gratified him in speaking in praise of the modest appearance of his new relation, and promised to assist the couple in furnishing their house ; and, if they continued to be deserving of it, assured him, his grand-children should always find a friend in him.

The poor old man in vain endeavoured to express what he felt, but his agitation, at such unlooked for kindness overcame him so much, that he found it impossible to make himself understood, and therefore desisted from the attempt.

Lord Edgell felt sensibly affected at observing the old man's emotion ; and taking his hand, he kindly pressed it as he put a note into it, desiring him to buy his wife a new gown with it, and hastening

from him he joined his sisters, whom he found with Sophia attending upon the younger part of the company,

“Who is that venerable old man, my dear brother, we saw you this moment conversing with?” said Lady Lucretia. “What a fine head for a painter. As I never saw him before I must conjecture he does not belong to S—.”

Upon hearing, he was on a visit to his grandson, who had lately taken a small farm in the village, the sisters proposed calling the next day upon the new married couple, and Sophia equally struck with the old grand-father, readily agreed to accompany them.

“I should not be surprised Lucretia,” observed Lady Caroline, “the pretty young woman, we were lately admiring, proves to be the wife of the old man’s grandson.”

Observe how attentive she is to the old folk."

"She is very pretty," cried George, whether married or single, and shall be my partner for the first dance, I am determined. She surely has much the appearance of a foreigner," he continued.

"Your fancy carries you a great way my good friend," said Lady Caroline laughing. "It is not very probable I think, an Englishman should have sought his wife in distant lands."

"George is however right," returned Lord Edgell; "as Thomas's wife is certainly an Italian."

"An Italian!" repeated Lady Caroline.

"Even so. Why should you be inclined to doubt the fact?"

“ I do not doubt it, but confess my curiosity is not a little raised to learn where the acquaintance commenced.”

“ You may easily have your desire gratified,” replied her brother smiling, “ by applying to the parties for information on the subject.”

Lady Caroline laughing, thanked him for his hint, and soon contrived to find an opportunity of addressing Flora, who much flattered at being thus distinguished, readily undertook to gratify the young ladies' curiosity and her fair auditress, they not only learned where the lovers had first met, but the whole history of their attachment and the good qualities of Thomas, which his pretty wife appeared delighted to dwell upon.

Pleased with the *naivete* of her new acquaintance, Lady Caroline continued con-

versing with her, till they were summoned to join the dancers, who were assembled on the lawn before the conservatory.

George claimed the hand of Thomas's wife, as Mr. Cecil came to seek his partner. The elder part of the company, seated at a little distance under some fine trees, were regaled with pipes and tobacco.

Sophia again opened the ball with lord Edgell; when they arrived at the bottom of the set, old Edwards, the venerable grandfather of Thomas, who with his wife, was delightedly looking on, rose and offered Sophia his seat; but declaring herself not in the least fatigued, made him resume it, and continued to converse with him and his dame till she was wanted in the dance, whom she found even more communicative than her husband.

At the conclusion of the second dance, Lord Edgell was called away, and his fair partner not allowing any one to be disturbed for her, made choice of a seat which nature had partly hollowed in a tree, near the spot where the old couple had placed themselves. Sophia was soon discovered by Lady Caroline, who laughingly comparing her to the Lady in the lobster, requested to be allowed to share her throne. In a few minuets more, they were joined by Mr. Cecil and several of their party who forming a semi-circle, designated them the Sovereigns of the woods; and refreshments being handed about, the healths of the sister queens were drank by all. Whilst the toast went round, Lord Edgell was seen returning accompanied by a gentleman, whom Sophia instantly recognizing for her brother in law Mr. Howard, descended from her throne to meet him. "What brings you to Longueville?" was the next enquiry she made, after that

concerning the healths of her sister and the children had been answered.

“You shall hear presently my dear impatient sister,” returned Mr. Howard smiling, “But permit me first to pay my respects to your worthy host, to shake Edward by the hand, whom I have not seen these two years; and deliver the compliments, I am charged with from my wife, to the Ladies Lucretia and Caroline.”

“You are, I find the same provoking Charles you ever were,” said Sophia, turning from him, “And to punish you I will not make another enquiry.”

“I fear then my dear Sophia,” said her father laughing, you will in that case inflict a more exemplary punishment upon yourself than on the aggressor. But happily he will not put your patience to any great trial, as I suspect he is as eager to impart to you

the occasion of his unexpected appearance here, as you can possibly feel to become acquainted with it."

"I plainly see my dear father will publish my secret, said Mr. Howard, if I do not enter into an immediate explanation of the reason, of my coming to Longeville, What will you say Sophia," he continued, when I tell you, my errand hither, was neither more nor less, than to run away with you.

"Not to night, I hope; said Lady Caroline, Indeed we cannot part with her so soon."

"I am willing," replied Mr. Howard, "to remain here till to-morrow, if you my dear Lady Caroline will promise to use your influence with the Marquis, to accompany my father and mother to Glenmore for a few days, when their visit to you is

concluded. Your brother has given me hopes of seeing him at that time, and has answered for Mr. Cecil."

"Well then," observed her Ladyship, I see no reason, why my father should not join so pleasant a party; and as our friends leave us in a few days, I will make it my request that he will attend us to the Grove at the time you mention; and have no doubt I shall be listened to."

Sophia soon after learned that her uncle and cousin had been way laid by Mr. Howard, as they were proceeding from Brighton, where they had disembarked, to Woodly; and that he had carried them in triumph to the Grove.

"Emily," continued Mr. Howard, "was not aware of Edward's vicinity; or we should not have been able, to have prevailed upon her to remain at Glenmore, whilst

her father ran down a few days to Woodly."

→"Did she not know of your intention of coming hither?"

"She certainly did not;" Mr. Howard replied, but has ere this, learned it from Matilda, who will also prepare her for seeing you return with me; Edward is already acquainted with her being at the Grove, and I should not be much surprized, as he thinks me ignorant of his attachment to her if he offers to accompany me home. I know not, my dear Sophia if I am justifiable in stealing you from hence. Lord Edgell I observed is not very delighted with my project, and his sister just now gave me to understand, I might expect to be called out by her brother for attempting to carry you off. I confess to you my dear sister, there is only one other in the world, I should have preferred before Lord Edgell for your hus-

band, but as he is, I understand from good authority, engaged elsewhere, I think, I may venture to congratulate you upon having won the affections of so estimable a character, as the heir of Longeville is allowed by all to be; and shall look forward with pleasure to the time when you will introduce him to me and Matilda, as our brother."

"Lord Edgell," said Sophia laughing, "will I fear never be your brother, if his being so, depends on my marrying him; Lady Caroline has, I plainly perceive, been amusing herself at our expence; but I must not suffer you to continue a moment in your present error; I esteem his Lordship; she continued more seriously; nay I feel the regard of a sister for him, which his uniform kind attentions to me, from the first day we met, have called forth. But

how totally different have they been to those of a lover."

Mr. Howard smiling, said, "You are then perfectly able to distinguish this difference between friendship and love, in the attentions you receive from our sex. Indeed my dear friend, I begin to suspect you are mistress of the subject; and those crimsoned cheeks assure me, I am not mistaken. Now for the definition."

"I am perfectly contented," returned Sophia laughing, "with your allowing me credit, when I decide upon those I have received from Lord Edgell, as having nothing to do with the passion of love, and shall leave the definition to Matilda. But come, my dear brother, it is time for us to the lawn where a display of fire-works will conclude the festivities of the day."

Several rockets had already been sent

off, as Mr. Howard and his sister joined the party assembled there. The villagers had surrounded the frame, on which they were fixed, and desirous of not drawing the attention from a wheel rocket, which was at that moment displayed to the astonishment of the far greater part of the eye witnesses, Mr. Howard proposed to Sophia their remaining some little time stationary in the rear.

Two young men in the dress of sailors stood near them, one of them expressing his admiration at the effect produced by the rockets, the other answered, "Ah! this is certainly very fine, but nothing to compare to what I saw in the spring at Bordeaux."

"Sartain and true, you are right," replied a man beside him. "But had you not Jack rather be in this here nice place, close to your native home, than be at Bordeaux."

“Ah ! I think, I had indeed,” he answered, “with my dear little Jane by my side,” drawing a young woman nearer to him as he spoke, “than in all the Bordeauxes in the world.”

Mr. Howard stepping forward, entered into conversation with the tars, and learned that Jack, as his companion called him, had been at Bordeaux at the same time, the Duke of Wellington passed through it, and in compliment to him, a grand display of fire-works had been made by the inhabitants of that town.

Mr. Howard, who was particularly attached to sailors in general, made the intended bridegroom a handsome present, and many a heart went that night light to bed, from similar presents being made them by the company assembled that evening at Longueville. The old couple were not forgotten, and a party was made the next

day for paying Flora and her husband a visit.

Mr. Howard had requested Sophia to be prepared to leave Longueville soon after breakfast the following morning. The Marquis had consented to accompany Mr. De Clairville to the grove, and Mr. Cecil required little pressing to induce him to promise being of the party.

On descending to the breakfast-room, Sophia found her brother pacing the vestibule apparently waiting for some one, when on observing her approach, he requested to know if she had seen Mr. Howard that morning.

“Not to exchange a word with him,” she replied. “I saw him not half an hour since from my window, crossing the Park, in the direction to the stables.”

The next minute he made his appearance

and telling Sophia the carriage would be at the door in less than an hour, he shook hands with Edward; and was continuing his way to the breakfast parlour, when the latter stopped his course.

“I have been thinking Charles,” he said, colouring a little, “there is no reason why I should not return with you to Glenmore to day.”

“Neither can I see any, why you should not, if you wish it,” replied Mr. Howard, with some difficulty suppressing a smile. “Matilda will be delighted to embrace her truant brother; and I shall be most truly happy in your company, if you can banish yourself from the presence of the fascinating Arrabella Fitzarthur, who, I observed last night, was directing all her artillery at your heart. Make your excuses then to the Marquis and his family, and I readily promise to wait another half

hour, to give you time for this, and to prepare for your journey."

"Did I not prophecy this?" said Mr. Howard laughing as Edward left them to give directions to his servant to prepare for accompanying him to Glenmore immediately. "Edward reminds me," he continued, "of a child, who, hiding his eyes with his hands, thinks it impossible for any one to see him."

"I now begin to look forward with some hopes to the time," cried Sophia, "when my dear brother and his Emily will be again as Harriet once expressed herself; "All, and every thing to each other."

Lady Caroline now entered, from the pleasure Grounds, and observing Mr. Howard and her friend, enquired how long they had been visible. "I have been en-

joying this lovely morning some time," she continued, "and am sorry you my dear Sophia, was too much engaged to partake the pleasure with me."

Your ladyship was not left to enjoy it alone, "I was happy to observe," said Mr. Howard; "as I think, I saw Mr. Cecil with you."

"He certainly joined me," she returned blushing, "as I was returning from my walk, and so did my brother."

"Whom you were quite as happy to see, I make no doubt."

"Why should you think, I was not?"

"Nay my dear Lady Caroline," you surely could not suspect me of speaking ironically. To me it appears perfectly natural, you should prefer the company of

your brother to that of any other man. It would have been a subject of great surprise to me, had I heard you say, "Indeed Mr. Howard I prefer Mr. Cecil's company infinitely more."

You are incorrigible I believe, she replied, more deeply blushing than before, she turned from him, and at that moment encountered the gaze of the last mentioned gentleman, who had just entered from the grounds with Lord Edgell.

Sophia compassionating the increasing confusion of her friend, took her arm, and saying she would desire her sister to read her husband a lecture for his impertinence; led the way to the breakfast-room, where the rest of the party had already assembled, and Lady Caroline asserting her sister to make the tea, escaped in some measure the significant glances, which

were from time to time directed towards her by Mr. Howard.

Edward's apologies had been most graciously accepted by the Marquis, who only expressed his hopes, he should see him again at Longueville, when his visit at Glenmore was ended. But Miss Fitzarthur could scarcely conceal her mortification on hearing Edward's intention of returning with his brother-in-law. She scarcely spoke during breakfast ; and the moment the carriage was announced, which was to convey him from her, she hastily rose and left the room. A large party dined at Longueville, and happily in one of the beaux, Miss Fitzarthur found a tolerable substitute for Edward De Clairville, whom she now protested was little removed from an idiot, and not half so handsome as his younger brother.

CHAP. III.



Emily was sitting with Mrs. Howard in her dressing-room, when the travellers arrived. Little Charles who was with them, first distinguished his father's voice, and ran to meet him as he ascended the stairs.

"Where is aunt Sophy papa," cried the child, who had understood he was gone to fetch her, and now appeared much chagrined at not seeing her with him.

“Have you not succeeded in persuading her to return with you?” enquired Mrs. Howard who felt equally disappointed with her son in believing her husband, was come back without Sophia,

“Oh! yes, I know she is come,” said Charles jumping about the room, “or papa would not smile so; cousin Emily will you not go with me and try to find her.”

“I suspect indeed your conclusions are right Charles,” Emily returned, “and will with pleasure accompany you in your intended search.”

“Then away with you both,” cried Mr. Howard laughing. “And when you have found the stray sheep send us the notice of it.

As soon as they had left the room, Mr. Howard mentioned to his wife her brother’s

having accompanied him back to Glenmore, and notwithstanding the lecture she read him, for placing Emily and Edward in so awkward a situation, he professed himself perfectly satisfied with what he had done, assuring her she would find that they both thanked him in their hearts, for giving them an opportunity of meeting, without many witnesses being present.

In the mean time Emily with her young companion, had commenced their search for Sophia; and not finding her in the breakfast, dining, or drawing-room, the former felt apprehensive, she was not in the house. But Charles remembering that they had not yet examined his father's study, ran forwards; and reaching the apartment before his cousin, but not able being to open the door, he called, "Aunt Sophy if you are here, do pray come out." Steps were the next instant heard fast approaching, and Emily was preparing to

reproach Sophia for her childish behaviour as the door opened when she beheld Edward.

Little expecting to find him there, she uttered a faint scream, and had he not hastened to support her, would have fallen to the ground. Sophia approaching almost at the same time, tenderly embraced her cousin, and then laughingly enquired, whether she had taken her old friend and playmate for a ghost, she then continued, "But you must forgive him my dear Emily, for having alarmed you so much, and then inform me, where I shall find Mrs. Howard,"

Emily attempted an apology for her childish behaviour, which she attributed to a nervous head-ach, that she had been tormented with all the morning; and Edward observed how pale she looked, entreated that she would sit down and recover herself a little, before she attempted to return.

His manner, at this moment, reminded Emily so forcibly of the Edward who, at Woodley, used to betray the same interest for her, that trembling from excess of emotion, she was glad to accept the seat he brought her.

Sophia found some difficulty in persuading her young nephew, to allow of her accompanying his uncle and Emily to his mother's dressing-room, as seated on her lap with his little arms clasped around her neck, he was paying off, he said, all the kisses he had owed her for a great long time. And when Edward, having placed the arm of Emily within his, offered his other to his sister, the latter was not allowed to accept it, as Charles declared his determination of taking the care of her himself.

Mrs. Howard expressed all the joy she felt at again seeing those whom she loved so much

under the same roof with her. Edward, she thought, was both thinner and paler, than when she last saw him ; but he had never looked more interesting ; and his affectionate sister anticipated with pleasure the time, when an explanation would take place between him and Emily, and all would then continue to glide on smoothly.

By Sophia's request, her sister attended her to the nursery, where the infant Matilda was, leaving Emily in their way in her own apartment, to recover from the agitation she had been thrown into, by the unexpected appearance of Edward at Glenmore.

After caressing the child for some time, Sophia returned it to the nurse, and accompanied its mother to her room, where she continued till dinner, conversing on interesting subjects.

Mrs. Howard related to her the history of her brother's entanglement with the lost Maria, for whom she had felt so deeply concerned.

“ I am of Edward's opinion,” she said, after having heard many particulars which she was before acquainted with ; “ that this unfortunate woman's death was hastened, if not entirely occasioned by her attachment to him. That Gressington has a terrible deal to answer for. He surely can never know happiness again.”

“ We hear,” replied Sophia,” he is a most miserable being, his parents are greatly to be pitied. Their son is seldom at home, but passes his time in travelling about the kingdom. The last account his mother gave of him, was, that he was going abroad with some noblemen, as a tutor to his sons. Had Edward's affections been

disengaged," she proceeded, "it would have been impossible for him to have resisted the united attractions of Maria Buckby, as when I first beheld her, though wasted to a shadow, the fine expression of her sweet countenance, was beyond any thing I can describe. It was that of an angel; indeed many times as I have sat watching beside her, I have said to myself, surely this is no form of mortal mould. Sweet girl, she was fitted for her native skies."

"Let us my dear sister," said Mrs. Howard; who was almost equally affected with Sophia, "dwell no longer on so melancholy a subject; but rather turn our thoughts to the happy prospect, now before us, of seeing Edward and our beloved Emily, at length made happy in the possession of each other. And now tell me," she continued, endeavouring to disperse the tears her sister's tale had drawn from her

eyes, "when am I to congratulate you and Lord Edgell, who, Charles tells me, is to have the honor of becoming my brother in-law.

"My dear Matilda," returned her sister, "I must beg you not to believe every thing your husband says. He has not the slightest ground to go upon, if he asserts there is an engagement subsisting between Lord Edgell and myself. I had hoped, he was convinced of his error, before he left Longueville."

"I am sorry to hear you say so. Is there any thing you particularly disapprove of in Lord Edgell?"

"No indeed, on the contrary, I feel the greatest esteem for his character, but he is not the man I could love."

“I should never have suspected you, of being so romantic,” said Mrs. Howard laughing. “You must my dear Sophia, be wonderfully changed since last summer. Love, was not then in your vocabulary; for I really believe, you did not at that time know the meaning of the word. Where, may I enquire, did you learn its solution?”

“I confess my folly,” said Sophia deeply blushing at her sisters raillery, “for speaking seriously of my feeling it in my power to return the affection of a man, who, most certainly, has never attempted, even by indirect means, to obtain mine. But it was my eagerness to convince you my dear Matilda, there was in reality no foundation for the report, your husband appears determined to believe, that made me guilty of so great an absurdity.”

“But,” said Mrs. Howard, “you have avoided answering my question.”

“ I do not recollect what it was, exactly.”

“ I am really concerned to find your memory has become, on a sudden, so treacherous,” replied her sister laughing. “ Shall I repeat it ? ”

“ If it is worthy of an answer ; which I in truth suspect, is not the case,” Sophia answered.

“ At all events,” said Mrs. Howard, “ you have not lost your sauciness ; and to punish you, I will persuade Charles to catechise you. He is, I am aware, already very suspicious, and, if there is any thing to discover, will find it out, I promise you. Had you not then better, at once, put me in your confidence, if there is any thing, you wish him not to detect.”

Sophia laughing, shook her head as she replied. “ You, my dear Matilda, are the

last person, I would confide in, had I any occasion for a confidante, as my secret would not be any to your husband, many minutes after it was in your possession. Married women are not to be trusted at any time ; and you less than any."

"Impertinent girl," said Mrs. Howard unable to contradict her sister, though much wishing to do so. "This speech shall not pass with impunity. Charles shall be made acquainted with it, and will, I know, revenge the cause of his traduced wife."

Sophia laughed at her sister's threat of calling in Mr. Howard's assistance to her aid ; and finding the former desirous of returning to the nursery before she descended to the dining room, left her, and directed her steps to her cousin's apartment, where she remained, till the second bell ringing summoned them to dinner.

Edward was standing near the door, as they entered the eating parlour. The expressive tenderness of his voice, as he addressed Emily, brought the finest bloom to her cheeks, as her heart throbbed with the delightful conviction, she was yet beloved by him.

“Do you not agree with us, Edward, in thinking Emily’s complexion is much improved by her visit to Paris? said Mr. Howard. You must, my dear cousin, give Matilda your perfumer’s address, as the rouge you wear, is infinitely finer than that, she has of late made use of.”

Emily’s colour was not lessened by this remark; and Sophia feeling for her confusion, took up weapons in her defence, which she so ably made use of, that the aggressor, was soon obliged to beg for quarter. When this was granted, and peace somewhat restored, Mrs. Howard

mentioned an engagement for the next day, which, she hoped, would not be unpleasant to any of the party. "You will meet an old acquaintance at the hall, Sophia," she continued. "Mr. Ormsby Willoughby is, at this time, on a visit there."

"Is he another rejected swain of yours Sophia?" enquired Mr. Howard.

"He wears the willow, I suspect. But my good brother," she returned, "I have not bound the garland on his brow; so do not I pray, look so hypocritically sad. Young Willoughby," she continued, "was seriously attached to my friend Annie Falconer, but finding her affections were in the possession of another, he not only gave up all hope of her for himself, but has, I have understood, been exerting all his influence with men in power, to procure promotion for his rival, that nothing may im-

pede his union with the woman, to whom he has been so long attached."

"He is then, a very noble fellow," said Mr. Howard. "And will soon, I hope, meet with a woman, who will reward him for his disinterestedness."

"I am not without my suspicions, he has already met with one, who is perfectly sensible of his worth," observed Mrs. Howard smiling,

"You allude to Elizabeth Davenport," said her husband. "I wish you may be right. Sophia, you remember meeting this young lady's aunt here last summer?"

"Perfectly well. And may I enquire, what Mrs. Aukland's favorite pursuit is at this time?"

“Astronomy,” he returned, “I do not mean the abstruce parts, those, she allows herself to be afraid of undertaking. But telescopes, globes, and books that will give her a little knowledge of the situations of the stars, she is just now eager to procure. The first, Mrs. Auckland has ordered from Town, which she tells me, she has desired to be one of the best, and till her globes arrive, she has begged permission to pay daily visits to my study, that she may not loose the little knowledge, she has already gained.”

“I hope, you give her a lesson each time, she honors your library with her presence.” said Sophia laughing.

“When I am in the way, but if possible, I confess to you, I make a point of being cut of it, and if you, my dear sister, wish for a moment’s peace, whilst you are here, I earnestly advise your keeping from

Mrs. Aukland the little knowledge, you possess upon the subject."

"Mrs. Davenport," said Mrs. Howard, "has been obliged to prohibit Elizabeth's accompanying her aunt into the open air, in her survey of the heavenly bodies, which, at this season, she often defers till midnight, as the poor girl caught incessant colds from her attendance upon her, at those times."

"Chemistry, was Mrs. Aukland's favorite pursuit last year, I remember," observed Sophia.

"It was," said Mr. Howard; but that lasted a very short time. Hydrostatics succeeded, and was pursued with the same eagerness; till astronomy became the favorite of the day, and we now hear of nothing but the rising, southing, and setting of Lyra, Capella, Aries, and Gemini."

“ With all these absurdities, Mrs Auckland passes for a sensible woman,” said Sophia, “ at least, I have heard you say, that many very intelligent men, have been deceived in thinking her such.”

“ There must be a strange compound about this lady,” observed Mrs. Howard, “ or she would not appear so contrary, to different people. For my part, I have always considered her a weak, vain woman.”

“ Mrs Auckland certainly does not possess the sterling sense, you are blessed with, my dear Matilda ;” said her husband. “ Yet I cannot agree with you in considering hers, a weak mind. She has been spoiled by our sex, to whom she contrives to make herself very agreeable. Her husband cared little for her, and occupied with his own pursuits, he left her at perfect liberty to indulge in every wild caprice, if they did not interfere with his pleasures.”

“Mr. Aukland is dead, I think,” said Emily.

“He is ; and I would have Edward on his guard against the powerful attractions of his widow. Do you not think with me, my dear Emily, he requires such a caution?”

“I can scarcely suppose him in any danger of losing his heart to the lady, you have been describing,” she answered deeply blushing at the archness of the glance directed towards her by Mr. Howard, as he made this enquiry.

“And pray may I enquire,” continued her tormentor. “If there is another person, you think him in greater danger of losing it to ?”

“Indeed,” she replied, still more confused ; “I have never thought about it.”

“ How dare you Emily, assert such a— shall I proceed ? ”

“ I think you had better not,” said Mrs. Howard, who, from the changes in Emily’s complexion, was apprehensive, he had already gone too far. “ Edward, it is to be hoped,” she continued, “ can take care of himself, without any assistance from either his sisters, or cousin. Emily my love, have you yet mentioned your wish to Charles, to have a seat erected under your favorite Beech trees ? ”

“ I have often,” said Edward, “ felt an equal desire to have one placed under the shade of those fine old trees, what say you Howard to gratifying it ? ”

“ That I wish you and Emily, to give the necessary directions to the carpenter about it. You would not, I suppose, wish

the length of it to consist of more than two or three feet, at farthest."

"My dear Charles," said his wife, "what can you be thinking of, the length, you speak of, will barely allow of two persons sitting upon it at a time."

"And, is it not the wish, of your brother and cousin, it should hold no more.?" said Mr. Howard archly."

"I can answer for Emily's never having entertained such an idea," returned Mrs. Howard. "But come, let us walk to the spot; we shall then be better able to decide, both upon the proper breadth and length of it."

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"You must indeed Matilda, read your husband a lecture the first minute, you find

yourself alone with him," said Sophia, as they were preparing for their walk. "He has behaved extremely ill; and had I been Emily, I should have been tempted to have seriously quarrelled with him."

"I began to fear myself," replied her sister, "Charles would carry the jest too far, as things are at this time. A few days will however, I trust, set the hearts of these tenderly attached lovers at rest; and then, we will permit him to laugh as much, and as often as he pleases. Did you not observe, my dear Sophia," continued Mrs. Howard, "the effect produced upon the cheeks of Emily, by Edward's addresses to her, as we were seating ourselves at table."

"Assuredly I did, and likewise perceived that it had not escaped his observation, any more than the heart-felt joy, it occasioned him, did me."

The sisters then spoke of the absent Harriot, from whom a letter had reached them from the Cape; whither a prosperous gale, had soon carried her, and her husband.

“When Edward is once married,” said Mrs. Howard; “I shall have only to wish my Sophia happily settled in life, and for the return of Alfred and his wife, to feel every desire of my heart gratified.”

“The latter wish, I sincerely participate in,” returned Sophia, with difficultly suppressing a smile.

“You have no design to marry at present. I presume this is what you intend to insinuate,” said her sister smiling. “I remember my dear Sophia expressing myself in the same manner, not a fortnight before I became acquainted with Mr. Howard. In less than a month, my tone was altered;

and, at the end of the third, I had permitted him to apply to my father for his consent to our union ; and, what is more surprising, I have never once repented doing so."

"In truth," said Sophia, tenderly embracing her sister. "I know not anywhere, a happier wife than yourself, nor the woman, who more deserves the blessings which surround her, than my Matilda."

"You are a flatterer, I am afraid," said Mrs. Howard smiling, as she returned the affectionate carresses of Sophia. "But we must really hasten to overtake Edward and his companion, whom I saw this moment, enter the wilderness."

As Mrs. Howard said this, little Charles came bounding towards them. He had, he said, been walking with nurse and the baby ; but seeing his mother and little

aunty, at a distance, had left his companions to join them. "Will you mamma," he continued, "now I am come, let me stay with you?"

"If you promise not to tire, I shall be glad of your company," she returned, "but remember my dear boy, neither your aunt nor myself can undertake to carry you."

Charles assured his mother, he could walk a great deal farther yet; and taking the hand of each, he trotted on, amusing them exceedingly with his remarks.

In a few minutes afterwards, they came in sight of Emily, who, with Edward, was seated on the side of a bank, waiting for them.

Charles, observing his Uncle and cousin, so comfortably seated, was anxious to join them, and heedless of the mischief he was

doing, requested the lovers to make room for him between them,

“ Had you not better sit on my knee ?” said his uncle. “ You will find it a much better seat for you than the wet grass.”

“ If it is so wet, returned the child, “ why do you let Emily sit down upon it. Mamma,” he cried, as Mrs. Howard, with Sophia drew near, “ should Emily sit upon the wet grass.”

“ Certainly not,” she replied, “ but my love, who told you it was wet ?”

“ Uncle Edward, mamma.” He would not let me sit between him and Emily, because he said, it was very wet.”

“ You ought to feel very grateful for your uncle’s taking so much care of you,” returned Mrs. Howard smiling. “ I hope

your cousin will not be a sufferer, from his strange forgetfulness of her."

Edward, colouring highly, said, the short time, they had been seated, would not, he hoped, materially hurt Miss Rushbrook.

"Oh! no; do not be apprehensive Mr. Howard on my account," she returned blushing also. "I am accustomed to sitting out of doors; and, as often make the turf my seat as not."

"Well then," said Mrs. Howard, "if you and your companion are sufficiently rested, perhaps you will have no objection to proceed with us to the beech trees;" Emily, instantly starting up, said, she was ready to attend her, and Edward taking an arm of each, they followed Charles and Sophia to the spot.

"The maple, and the beech of oily nuts
"Prolific, and the lime, at dewy eve,
"Diffusing odours"

were principally to be found in this beautiful retreat, which formed a kind of Amphitheatre. Emily had fancifully named it, Oberons bower. It was about a quarter of a mile from the house, and can alone be entered through the wilderness. This had been the favorite retreat of Harriot, who, with Alfred Howard, had spent many of her mornings there, during her last visit at the Grove; and several of her most beautiful drawings, had been designed under the shade of the trees, which ornamented it.

Mr. Howard, on their return to the house, hearing from Edward, that Emily had named the spot, Oberon's bower, assured her, it had been christened by him some time before, *the bower of Love*: and hoped, she would permit it to retain its original name.

Emily blushing at the arch look he gave

Her, as he said this, turned away, but in going so, met the eyes of Edward tenderly fixed upon her. Still more confused, she stammered something about her work or netting, which she had left in her cousin's dressing-room; and saying she would seek it there, hastened from the apartment.

“Upon my word Edward,” said Mr. Howard laughing, as the door closed upon her. It was too bad in you, to alarm the poor girl thus. Nay, do not pretend to justify yourself, observing he was going to speak, “I tell you, those eyes of yours told a tale this moment, that should have only met the ear of the timid Emily, in the grove, consecrated to lovers. You must, indeed my dear fellow, be more on your guard in future, or I foresee, you will have some difficulty in prevailing upon her, to accompany you thither.

“My dear Charles,” returned his bro-

ther, " you have, I confess discovered my secret, and indeed I care not, how you rally me upon it, if one, whom I venerate so much, escapes your lash ; and now I have thrown myself entirely on your mercy, I must earnestly entreat, you will not continue, as you have hither done, to amuse yourself at my expence, in Emily's presence."

" You are an honest fellow, in not denying your regard for that amiable girl," said Mr. Howard, shaking his brother by the hand, " and on that account, I promise you to be more on my guard for the next two days ; which time I allow all explanations taking place, between you and Emily."

" Say a week rather, my dear Charles, and, if at the end of that time, I have mustered sufficient courage to address her on this subject of my affection, I shall call up-

on you for your congratulations, on having so soon overcome my apprehensions. But should her heart be in the possession of another——”

“ Pshaw! nonsense man,” said Mr. Howard. “ you have nothing to fear on that account. You know she refused Lord Clavering, before she left England ; and since that, Sir Charles tells me, she has rejected several offers, one from a gentleman of very large property, who was introduced to her at Paris.”

“ I fear my Uncle, even more than I do Emily,” said Edward. “ He was far from being satisfied with me, when we parted at Melcombe, and I know not any reasons, he should not be so now.”

“ My dear Edward,” said Mr. Howard speaking seriously, “ do not let me see you

giving way thus, to such unnecessary apprehensions. Your uncle is acquainted with all you have suffered from October last ; and has imparted it to his daughter."

"Impossible ! how could he learn it ?"

"From your father : I had this intelligence from Sir Charles himself ; who, at the same time, mentioned the many tears his darling Emily had shed for your, and the poor Maria's sufferings."

"There is the pang ; I sometimes fear, I am not paying sufficient respect to the memory of one, whose life, I must ever believe, was shortened through my means, when I am so early seeking to obtain the affections of another woman."

"I do not see this," returned Mr. Howard, Emily was the chosen of your heart, many years before Miss Buckby knew

There was such a being as yourself in existence. It was her knowledge of this, that made her so resolute not to ratify her engagement with you, after she learned there was no truth in the report of Emily's marriage with Lord Clavering.

“She was an angel,” exclaimed Edward, “and I have only to lament, not having been able to return such disinterested affection, as I ought to have done.”

“She is an angel now, I firmly believe,” said Mr. Howard. “But as we cannot, did we wish it, restore her to life, let us endeavour to evince our regard for her, by acting in the manner she wished us to do. In short my dear Edward, by becoming the husband of Emily, you will comply with the last request, the now beautified spirit expressed, before she was called hence.”

“ And did Maria express such a wish ?” he returned with great emotion. “ Dear lamented friend, where am I to find your equal ?”

“ In your cousin,” said Mr. Howard expressively, “ who is the only woman to make you happy. But let us now drop this conversation, and take a turn with me, dear Edward, before the ladies again make their appearance. Sir,” he cried as they stepped out upon the lawn, “ their is Mrs. Auckland’s favorite Capella, and the *little kids* she talks so incessantly about. You must prepare yourself to receive a lesson from the astronomical lady to-morrow evening, if it proves as fine as the present.”

Mr. Howard, on returning to the house, where his wife and her companions soon joined him and Edward, kept his word with the latter, nor made use of one expression

that could call a blush to the cheek of Emily: who was drawn into describing the present pursuits of the Parisian females, with whom she had been intimate, during her visit to that capital. Midnight passed before any one of the party was aware of it. As Emily rose to take her candle from the side-board, Edward in assisting her to light it, contrived to give the hand extended to receive it, a gentle pressure, as a general good night was uttered by all. Sophia attended her cousin to the door of her apartment, and then proceeded to the nursery to take a peep at Charles and Matilda, before she retired to her own room.

CHAP. IV



The party at Mrs. Davenport's consisted, besides her own family and that of the Grove, of Ormsby Willoughby, Mr. Cleveland, the rector of the parish, his wife and daughter, and a young clergyman on the point of marriage with the latter.

Mr. Cleveland's venerable figure inspired respect, where-ever he appeared. He had held the living of L—— nearly forty years, where he had brought up a large

family, who were now dispersed into almost every quarter of the kingdom.

Louisa, the only daughter, had been educated entirely under the eye of her parents, to whom she was indebted for every valuable acquisition of knowledge, she had attained. Miss Cleveland, it is true, could neither perform upon any musical instrument, nor dance in a superior style; but she was perfectly mistress of her native language, and not entirely ignorant of either, the French, or Italian.

The gentleman, to whom she was engaged, was the son of a neighbouring clergyman, and had been from boyhood the companion of the younger Clevelands. He had at this time the curacy of a parish not far from L——, and to forward his union with Louisa, had the last two years taken pupils; and was accompanied by one of them, in his visit to the hall.

The Howards had long known and respected the worthy rector of L———. In performing the duties of his situation, Mr. Cleveland's example, was worthy of imitation ; for his practice, accorded with his doctrine : in the pulpit, the latter was sound, though he himself did not incline to any particular sect. It was drawn from the fountain head, and few that heard him preach, returned unedified home.

Mrs. Cleveland was not so generally liked as her husband, for from the natural reserve of her manners, her value was scarcely known beyond her own circle, and there she was almost adored. In watching over a rising family, and in attending to the necessities of her husband's parishioners, Mrs. Cleveland had pursued " the noiseless tenor of her way."

The Howards knew and loved this excellent woman for her many virtues; and

they were equally esteemed by her. Miss Cleveland possessed her mothers superior sense, with having imbibed her reserve, it was a matter of surprise to some, that Louisa should have acquired so graceful an address, shut up, as she had been in an old parsonage house, with only the dronish society of her parents, or that she occasionally met with in her visits to the Davenports. But Miss Cleveland possessed that happy temperature of mind, which makes circumstances conducive to comfort; and felt equally contented those months, when the bad roads about L——, made her a comparative prisoner to the house, as when fine weather, and the return of her friends to the country, brought with them a succession of amusements.

The time was now arrived, when she was to quit the paternal roof, and remove to the dwelling of her husband.

Young Deloraine was beginning to be impatient, to call Louisa his own ; and her father and mother had at length, been prevailed upon to fix the day, for giving him their beloved child.

Mrs. Cleveland in confidence, mentioned to Mrs. Howard in the course of the day, they passed together at the Hall, that the following Thursday was fixed upon for the wedding. "A marrying day I believe," she added throughout the kingdom. I know not what we shall do without our Louisa ; she continued." But I have the consolation of knowing, the son in-law she has given us, will cherish her with the same care, we have hitherto done."

Mrs. Howard congratulated her, upon the acquisition, such a young man as Mr. Deloraine, would be to her family.

He was, at that time she spoke, conver-

ing with Edward, at some distance from the rest of the company ; and the bright eyes of more than one female were directed to that part of the room, which they had withdrawn to.

Mrs. Aukland said, they were a perfect prototype of the constellation Gemini : “Mr. De Clairville,” she continued, “from having the advantage in height, we will call Castor, which is the brightest star in that luminary, whilst Mr. Deloraine must be contented to represent his twin brother, Pollux. You may never, perhaps, have observed this beautiful constellation in the heavens, my dear Miss De Clairville,” she cried, “addressing herself to Sophia ; and I am sorry, it will not be in my power, to point it out to you this evening ; but unfortunately it does not rise at this time of the year, till you must, probably, have been in bed several hours I shall, however, have great pleasure in shewing you its situation on

the globe, when I pay my next visit to your brothers library."

Sophia found some difficulty in suppressing a smile, as she returned Mrs. Aukland her thanks for her kind intentions of instructing her, in her favorite science, but lamented her time would be too much occupied in other pursuits, during the stay she made at Glenmore to allow of her profiting much by her kindness.

"I am aware," said Mrs Aukland, "Mr. Howard would make a far more able instructor, than I can pretend to be, I am indeed very ignorant, but my time has certainly been, as yet, very limited; and I am sometimes surprized at myself, on finding I have advanced so far: for I am already able to distinguish the positions of the different constellations on the globe. If I can call to-morrow at the Grove, you shall examine me; which I can inform

you, my dear Sophia, you may easily do, without having attained any knowledge of the science yourself ; as with the assistance of a book of problems, you have nothing to do, but read the positions of the stars on or for such a night, whilst I point to them on the globe.”

“ Exceeding amusing indeed,” exclaimed Ormsby Willoughby, who had overheard the latter part of this speech. “ I hope, dear Mrs. Auckland, you will employ me in this manner as well as Miss De Clairville ; I shall enjoy it surprisingly.”

“ Very probably, but, I have not forgot good sir, your drawing Elizabeth away last night, when I was endeavouring to teach her to find out the four stars in square declaring you could entertain her much better. She may now return the compliment by amusing you to-morrow ; at all

events, I am determined you shall be no interruption to me."

"You appear Willoughby, to have got into some terrible scrape there," said Mr. Howard; "Can I assist in extricating you from it?"

"I heartily wish you would;" he returned. "And whilst you are doing this, I will join the party in the bow window. Will you not accompany me thither, my dear Miss De Clairville?"

Sophia happy to escape the vicinity of Mrs. Aukland, rose with alacrity, and seating herself next to Louisa Cleveland, continued chatting with her, till dinner was announced. She was a great favorite with the father of Louisa, next to whom she was seated at table. Mrs. Cleveland, delighted at observing the pleasure, her husband appeared to attend to the lively remarks of

his fair neighbour, turned her smiling countenance continually to that part of the table they occupied.

“You find our Sophia, my dear madam,” said Mr. Howard, “as dangerous a rival as ever.”

“Indeed I do,” returned Mr. Cleveland. “And if her fascinations continue to increase every succeeding year, as they have done the last, I know not where my jealousy will stop, or to what it may prompt me.”

“I would have every one be aware of her fascinations,” he replied “from the son of a marquis, to the grandson of a cobbler: for she is the vilest little wretch for running away with the affections of man, woman, and child in his Majesty’s united dominions. I ever saw.”

“This is,” said Ormsby Willoughby,

gravely, "I am sorry to observe, Miss De Clairville's character throughout — shire, Hampshire, and the vicinity of Longueville. Two Lords, as many Baronets, and treble the number of Commoners, have already felt the power of these fascinations, to their cost. Now, I vote," he continued, "for this dangerous fair one being banished to some retired part of the kingdom; where her power of doing so much mischief, may in some measure be put a stop to."

"You Ormsby, at least have escaped wearing my chains," said Sophia, as she archly directed a glance to Miss Davenport. "It must therefore be malice prepense, that has induced your proposing to send me into banishment."

"And how is it possible, for you to answer, for my never having worn them, fair lady?" he laughingly replied.

“Because,” she returned, “I was not so entirely blinded by vanity, as not to discover you were the victim of *far* more powerful attractions.”

Ormsby coloured highly believing, Sophia alluded to his former attachment to Miss Falconer.

“The tables, I fear, are turned upon you Willoughby,” said Mr. Howard; “I should, most probably, have fared as ill as yourself, had you not in so friendly a manner, (for which accept my thanks,) diverted the attention of the enemy.”

“I must think Ormsby deserved the rebuff he met,” observed Emily smiling; “and I confess, I felt happy, Sophia did not spare him.”

“And I perfectly agree with Miss Rushbrook in thinking, the gentleman

merited what he met with, for his attack upon Miss De Clairville," rejoined Louisa Cleveland.

"In mercy, dear ladies, spare me this once," cried Ormsby, raising both his hands to his ears, "and never shall you again, I promise you, have reason to complain of me, for being guilty of the same offence."

"One young lady of this party, I observe, has been more merciful to you Mr. Willoughby," said Mr. Cleveland smiling, as he looked towards Miss Davenport. "I almost fancied, she compassionated the offender."

"Then you must, I am convinced my dear sir, have misinterpreted the expression of that young lady's countenance," returned Mr. Howard, "as to me, she ap-

peared to *enjoy*, rather than to pity poor Willoughby's confusion."

Miss Davenport's colour almost surpassed that, the moment before on Ormsby's face, as she pretended to appear unconscious of being the person alluded to.

Sophia, now holding out her hand across Elizabeth to young Willoughby, offered to become reconciled to him. The pledge of amnesty, was gladly accepted by him, which he said, he hoped, would lead to a permanent peace.

The females did not continue much longer at table after this, and the gentlemen preferring their company to the bottle, soon joined them in the drawing room, where tea, at the request of Mrs. Aukland, had been ordered, who much wished to take advantage of a fine evening to give Sophia her first lesson in astronomy.

Sophia as they were walking, learned from Ormsby Willoughby, that Young Ainsley had quitted the navy ; and was appointed to a lucrative post under government, which would enable him to marry immediately. Ormsby did not mention the name of the friend, who had procured the situation for Henry ; but Sophia was assured it could be no other than himself, and she at length induced him to acknowledge her conjectures were right. She then enquired, where the parties at present were? as to her great disappointment, she had heard but once from Miss Falconer, since she had left Melcombe ; Ormsby answered, he believed that she was still with Lady Berwick, in Cornwall, where Henry intended joining her.

“ Her Ladyship is the only one who will have any reason to repine, at this unexpected change in Annie’s affairs.” observed Sophia, “ and she will, I am afraid, find

some difficulty in reconciling herself to parting with her. Does your Mother know of the happiness that awaits her niece, in her union with Henry Ainsley ? ”

“ She does not,” he returned, “ and I do not scruple saying to you, who are so well acquainted with the unkind treatment poor Annie has received from her, that I am apprehensive when the intelligence reaches her, *pleasure*, will not be the predominant sensation it will excite ; and Barbara, I know, will be scarcely able to refrain from tears of rage, when she hears her hitherto despised cousin, is on the point of connecting herself so advantageously.”

“ If such will be their feelings,” returned Sophia. “ I grieve for them both.”

“ Young Willoughby sighed, as he said, “ and such they will be, I have no doubt.”

Mrs. Aukland here interrupted them, and taking the arm of Sophia desired her to look towards the south for *Venus*, which she informed her was at that time, the evening star ; and then telling her she would discover *Acquila etcætra* as it grew duskier, continued her instructions perfectly unconscious, her pupil was a greater mistress of the science than she could ever hope to become.

Young Layton, the pupil of Mr. Deloraine, who had been attending with mock gravity to the lessons the astronomical lady was giving her wearied auditor, now begged, she would inform him, how far he must go to the *North* to loose sight of *Ursa Major*.

“ To the south, I presume you mean,” returned Mrs. Aukland smiling at his supposed ignorance. “ Those are problems, I never trouble myself with,” she continu-

ed : “ But leave them to be answered by your *Philosophers*.”

“ I beg you pardon madam,” said the youth, “ but indeed, I was not aware, the question, I put, was so very difficult to answer, but perhaps you can tell me the names of the last two plannets that were discovered a few years back ? ”

Mrs. Aukland answered, she had certainly heard of them, but had entirely forgotten their appellations. “ My memory,” she continued, “ is *very* treacherous.”

“ Then I should be seriously apprehensive madam,” returned young Layton ; as he looked archly at Sophia, “ you will never make a good astronomer.”

Mrs. Aukland laughed, but it was evident she was displeased ; as she remained silent for at least *ten minutes*.

“That pupil of yours, Deloraine, is a fine youth,” observed Mr. Howard. “He reminds me a little, of my friend Lord d’Arcy.”

“And so he has often done me,” returned Mr. Cleveland, “at least, what Lord d’Arcy was, at his age.”

“Have you heard from your *ci-devant* pupil, since he left England?” enquired Mr. Howard of that gentleman.

“I grieve to answer, I have not.” replied Mr. Cleveland. “I knew not even his intention of going abroad, till I was informed, he was with his family in Italy.”

“We heard from Lord Montreuil’s steward in our visit yesterday to the castle,” said young Willoughby, “The family were expected in ten days at farthest, for that Lady Montreuil was beginning to be

exceedingly uneasy about her son, who is in a very indifferent state of health ; and has, on that account, prevailed on the Earl, to return to England immediately."

"Sophia," cried Mr. Howard. "Did you hear at Longueville, of Lord d'Arcy's having been so ill ?"

"I heard some time since, from his sister, he had not been well ;" she replied changing colour. "Have you learned any further particulars of him."

"You certainly ought to be the best informed on the subject" he replied, "if you received your intelligence from Lady Grace : and I now have reason to hope, the account Mr. Willoughby heard of my friend's ill state of health, has been considerably magnified, you may perhaps be able to tell me, when I am to have the

pleasure of seeing my friend again. I was not, he continued, till this moment, aware you corresponded with his sister, or, I should have made this enquiry long since."

"And it is one, I am sorry to say, cannot be answered by me," returned Sophia, endeavouring to appear as unconcerned as possible. "But this I can inform you. The Italian family with whom he has been staying, will be of the party when he does come."

"I hope you do not mean by this, to insinuate," said Mr. Howard, "my friend has fallen in love with the daughter of that noble house?"

"If the Lady Laurina resembles her mother," observed Mr. Cleveland, "she must be very handsome."

"You have seen the late Marchesa, then?"

“Several times, she, with the Marchese, accompanied Lord and Lady Montreuil to d’Arcy castle, during their last visit to this kingdom ; the first time, I was in the Marchesa’s company, was at the christening of Lord d’Arcy; for whom she and her husband answered for at the font. The Marchese I had seen before, when in Italy with the Earl, and afterwards in London. With Lady de Rosalvi, I was charmed; she appeared to me, in every respect, so much superior to her countrywomen in general, I could scarcely persuade myself she was an Italian.

“ This amiable woman,” continued Mr. Cleveland, “ did not live long after the birth of her daughter ; who, if she is possessed of but half the beauty of her mother or only one third of her fascinations, I should think it scarcely possible my young friend’s heart can resist such powerful attractions.”

“ If Lady Laurina resembles the Marchesa, who, from your description, must have been a miracle of beauty,” replied Grimsby Willoughby smiling, “ I should have been induced my dear Mr. Cleveland to think with you, it would be impossible to withstand such charms, had I not been assured Lord d’Arcy’s heart, has been some time in the possession of another fair one, whose fascinations may possibly rival, if they do not surpass, those of this lovely Italian.”

“ The lady you allude to,” said Mr. Cleveland, “ is, I presume, a daughter of the house of Longueville.”

“ He cannot mean Lady Lucretia,” returned Mr. Howard. “ As her sister only two nights since, assured me, the projected alliance, which, I had been led to believe, was to have united the houses of Longueville and Montreuil, was entirely at an

end ; and who the lady is, Willoughby affirms holds lord d'Arcy's heart in chains, I am at a loss to discover."

" I can only hope," said Mr. Cleveland, " our friend has not fixed his affections, where they will not meet the approbation of his father. On an unworthy object, I am convinced he has not."

" You are perfectly correct in asserting that, to be *impossible*," said Ormsby. " The lady, I allude to, is one of the most amiable, as she is the most beautiful of her sex : and should Lord d'Arcy ever have the happiness of calling her his, you my dear sir, and the rest of his *real* friends, will have every reason to be perfectly satisfied with his choice."

" I confess, you have not a little raised my curiosity to learn the name of this *paragon*," said Mr. Howard. " Come Orms-

by," he continued. "confess *who* and *what* she is."

Willoughby laughing, assured him, his honor would not allow him to reveal the name of this distinguished fair one.

"Sophia ;" cried Mr. Howard, "cannot you assist me to discover her?"

Emily, apprehensive her cousin's speaking countenance would betray the interest she could not help feeling in this conversation, said sportively ; "I have often heard *our* sex accused of possessing an insatiable curiosity ; but that the lords of the creation should be subject to the same infirmity, and acknowledge it also, is a matter of the greatest surprize to me."

"I have often heard the De Clairvilles remarked for sauciness," returned Mr. Howard laughing, "but never before sus-

pected, a *Rushbrook* could be guilty of such a failing. From which of your cousins my dear Emily," he added with one of his archest looks, "have you been taking a lesson?"

"From yourself, I suspect," said Sophia, "for no where could she have met with a more able instructor."

"Come, come Charles," said Mrs. Howard. "I will not have Emily taken to task, for what so much becomes her; remember, it is but two days since, you were expressing a wish to see her thus animated."

Mr. Howard, forgetful of his promise to Edward, was going again to bring a blush to the cheek of Emily, by attributing the sudden alteration in her manner, to his appearing among them; but fortunately, at that instant Mrs. Auckland, wanting to have some optical delusion explained, which she

believed, she had discovered in the heavens, called upon him to elucidate it: and not many minutes after he had satisfied the astronomical lady, in what had so much puzzled and perplexed her, the carriage arrived to convey the Glenmore party home.

CHAP. V.



As they were returning to the Grove, Emily, after expressing herself much pleased with her visit, begged Mr. Howard to inform her if she had understood him right, when she heard him address Mr. Cleveland as the *ci-devant* tutor of Lord d'Arcy.

“ You certainly did my dear Emily,” he returned. “ As the last six months before the latter was entered at College, he passed

entirely under the roof of the worthy rector. Mr. Cleveland," continued Mr. Howard, "was presented to the living of L—— by the late Lord Montreuil, soon after his return from the continent, whither he had accompanied the present Earl as his tutor; who has evinced the regard he continues to feel for this worthy man, by the interest he has exerted in setting the younger Cleverlands forward in the world. The eldest son is provided for in the church. The second, who is in the army, has lately been promoted to the rank of Major, and the two younger ones are in mercantile houses, and will soon it is expected, become junior partners, through Lord Montreuil's assistance, who has offered to advance the money necessary for that purpose."

"I am happy to find at last," said Emily, "there are some good qualities belonging to the Earl."

“Had you then my fair coz,” returned Mr. Howard, “imbibed so very bad an opinion of his Lordship. I did not before know you were acquainted with any part of the family, but Lord d’Arcy.”

“I met the Earl at Longueville last summer,” she replied; “but it was not there I formed my opinion of him,” she continued somewhat disconcerted at having been so much off her guard. “I had, long ere that time, heard of his ridiculous *pride of ancestry*, which induces him to look upon every one, as entirely beneath his notice, who cannot trace their fathers and grandfathers from the conquest.”

“I am very little acquainted with the Earl,” said Mr. Howard. “His son, who we met in the autumn at Brighton, I am now become very intimate with; and a nobler fellow exists no where—how often! have I wished one of my Matilda’s sisters, had

been so fortunate as to have become the object of his choice."

"Sophia, at that minute, happily discovered the ruins of an old church, which she said had never attracted her attention before; and possibly might not have done so now, had she put her head out of the window, to escape hearing her brother's lamentation on the old subject of his friend's insensibility to the attractions of his sisters.

Emily, smiling at her cousin's manœuvre to change the conversation, seconded her design by pretending to be as much struck with the beautiful effect of the moonlight upon the broken arches, though in fact, she lost sight of it the next moment, by the intercepting trees.

Sophia's end was however answered, as nothing more at that time was said of Lord d'Arcy, and his much lamented insensibility.

On entering the drawing room, after her return to Glenmore, she found two letters on the chimney piece for her, that had been forwarded from Longueville. One was from Miss Falconer, containing a confirmation of the pleasing intelligence which had before been communicated to her by Ormsby Willoughby. The other was from Lady Grace, and was dated Paris, where her Ladyship said, she found they should be detained some time, from the indisposition of her father, who had been seriously indisposed for several days. She further added, Lord Montreuil was exceedingly desirous to proceed directly to England, but his physicians, who were the most eminent men in their profession, Paris could produce, would not hear of his attempting this at present. The Marchese di Rosalvi and his family were with them, she said, in Lady Laurina and her aunt, her mother and herself found every support. Lady Grace merely said, her brother, was as

well as usual, and she believed almost as anxious, as his father, to find himself again in his native land.

Before she retired to bed, Sophia gave her cousin the letter, she had received from Lady Grace, to read, who, after perusing it, said, as she returned it, "I trust for the sake of his family, Lord Montreuil will not die before he reaches England."

"*Die !*" repeated Sophia. "You surely do not consider him in danger ?"

"Indeed I do. If the Earl was not very seriously ill, do you think the medical men would have laid so strict an embargo on him ? when was Lady Grace's letter dated ? on the 20th. of August, it is now the 26th. Surely, if lord Montreuil had been in a state to travel, we should, ere this, have heard of his arrival at the castle. The Longueville family will however, possibly bring us some

intelligence of their movements, when they come to Glenmore.”

Sophia agreed with her in thinking this not improbable ; and then taking leave of Emily for the night, she retired to bed; but not to rest, for her sleep was unrefreshing to her, and when she joined the family at breakfast, her heavy eyes and loss of colour did not pass unnoticed by her anxious relatives.

Emily, who alone was able to account for this, finding her cousin attributed her pallid countenance to a bad head ach, persuaded her to lie down for an hour, and taking her work she would have established herself in Sophia's apartment for the morning, but the latter infinitely preferring to be alone, at length prevailed upon her to give up her intention and return to the party below.

Emily, thinking her cousin was inclined to sleep, stole quietly out of her room, and was proceeding to Mrs Howard's dressing room, when she was met by Edward, who telling her his sister and little Charles had the minute before left the house for a walk, enquired if she felt disposed to follow them.

Emily felt perfectly so ; but desired him not to wait for her, said she would join him and his sister, as soon as she had given necessary directions to Margaret about her mistress.

Edward, entreating she would not be long, waited for her in the hall, and the moment she made her appearance drawing her arm through his, he led the way through the wilderness to their favourite bower ; when pointing to the seat which had, by his directions, been raised under the shade of the beech trees, he enquired, if it were such as she approved.

It was exactly what she wished ; and seating herself upon it, she said smiling, “ you must have been inspired by *Oberon* himself, my dear cousin, or you could never have succeeded in forming it on the exact model, I had planned in my own mind.”

“ I was perhaps inspired,” he replied as he returned her smile, “ but not by the king of the faries. You remember my dear Emily,” he continued, “ to whom this beautiful retreat is dedicated by my brother Howard ? ”

Emily’s cheeks were instantaneously of a carnation dye, at hearing him allude to the name, that gentleman had sportively given the spot she was then seated in, and hastily rising said, she would seek Mrs. Howard and her little boy, and bring them back with her to admire the commodiousness of the newly erected seat. But Edward, gently detaining her, cried, “ I cannot suffer

you to leave me for any such purpose. Matilda will, I hope, often sit on this bench with her husband and children ; but at this moment I wish not for her presence nor any third person to withdraw your attention from myself. Dear Emily," he continued, taking her hand, "you have not now to learn, how cruelly my heart has of late been torn by conflicting passions : that heart which has been yours so long, that scarcely can I remember the time, when it was not in your possession: You are not unacquainted with the misery I underwent, when I considered you as lost to me for ever. That time I cannot now recall to recollection without feeling my senses again about to leave me. Will you not then hasten, my beloved friend, to relieve my present apprehension. You, who are truth and candour itself, tell me, I entreat, if there is any hope of my ever winning your affections? In short, will you permit me to apply

to your father for his consent to your becoming mine for ever ? ”

Edward had unconsciously thrown his arm round the waist of his cousin, and now entreating her to decide his fate, he felt her whole frame tremble as he drew her nearer to him, and looking in her face, he saw it pale as death. Much alarmed, he called upon her name, conjuring her to relieve his fears by speaking to him. In a few minutes, which were passed by him, in the most dreadful suspense, Emily making a strong effort to recover herself, in a voice almost inarticulate from emotion, bade him not despair, and almost at the same time hiding her blushing face on his shoulder, she confessed an attachment for him, ardent even as his own.

Whilst Edward was pouring forth the excess of happiness, this confession of his beloved Emily had occasioned him, and was

leading her on to give him various proofs of her heart having been long all his own. Sophia was reading and re-reading the letter she had received the evening before from Lady Grace, till she was joined by her sister, who, after expressing her hope she had lost her head ach, mentioned having seen Edward and her cousin, directing their steps to the bower. "I have cautioned Charles," she continued, "to avoid that part of the grounds, and have left him so happy at the intelligence I conveyed to him, that I wish, I had more of the same nature to communicate: You understand me Sophia?"

"Perfectly, but I was before aware your husband found so much delight from *match making*."

"Saucy girl!" said Mrs. Howard, "you must be convinced it is only the interests he takes in Edward's happiness, that has oc-

casioned the joy he has lately been expressing, as there will now, I trust, be no longer any thing to prevent, its being complete. I never felt angry with you before," she continued, "but confess, I do feel at this moment every possible inclination to quarrel with you, I hope, however you did not really mean what you said?"

"If I thought my dear Matilda, for a moment believed me serious," her sister answered, "I should be inclined, to be as quarrelsome as yourself. Rest assured, I did not, in sober earnestness, mean what my impertinent tongue uttered; therefore my beloved sister, banish that serious countenance, and in its place, let me see those dimpled smiles, that so much become you."

"I perceive," said Mrs. Howard smiling, "you hope by a little flattery, to induce me to forget the offence you have been guilty of towards my husband."

“ I care not what you think, so my end is answered,” returned Sophia, as throwing her arms around her sister, she playfully imprinted a kiss upon each little dimple, as it appeared.

“ But tell me Sophia,” said Mrs. Howard, as she now rose to leave her, “ what is become of your late annoying head-ach ? of which I observe no traces left.”

“ You may have frightened it away I believe,” she returned. “ At least, I feel no more of it. And now I am rid of so troublesome a companion ; I will seek little Charles to take a run with me in the park.”

“ Stop a few minutes,” said her sister, “ and I will accompany you. The elder Charles will have no objection to be of the party ; therefore, whilst you are looking for his son, I will invite him to join us in our ramble.”

As the sisters were about to separate, Mrs. Davenports's carriage drove up to the door.

“How provoking is this,” cried Mrs. Howard. Instead of a delightful walk, you my dear Sophia will be condemned to attend for an hour to Mrs. Aukland, whilst she twists the globe about, to find her *favorite stars*, as she terms them. Shall I for once, tell a f—i—b, and say you are not within?”

“Oh no!” replied Sophia laughing, “I cannot indeed permit you to falsify your word for me. Besides,” she continued, “you remember Mrs. Aukland mentioned yesterday, her intention of calling this morning, which, though I had forgotten till this minute, she must not suppose I did.”

* * * * *

“ My dear Miss De Clairville,” cried the astronomical lady, as Sophia, and Mrs. Howard entered the drawing room, “ I have been dreaming of having discovered the brightest planet, that ever yet made its appearance in the heavens.”

“ Your dream then, my dear madam is certainly come to pass,” observed Ormsby Willoughby, whom Mrs. Auckland had been at length prevailed upon to forgive, and to permit his accompanying her and her niece to Glenmore, “ for see,” he added, pointing to Sophia as he spoke, “ it is there. Fairest of the heavenly bodies ;” he continued, after the usual salutations of the morning had passed between them, “ are you yet to learn, the Montréuil family arrived at the castle yesterday ? ”

Mrs. Howard expressed some surprise at their returning so much sooner than she had expected, and enquired of Ormsby

from whom he had received his information.

He replied, from Mrs. Cleveland upon whom they had called that morning, and added. "It was from her we learned of Lord Montreuil's being considered in imminent danger, as her husband received a summons late last night, to repair instantly to the castle, if he wished to see the Earl alive "

Mrs. Howard at receiving this intelligence, appeared much shocked, and Sophia, notwithstanding she was prepared to expect something of the kind, remained gazing upon Ormsby without being able to articulate a sentence.

"I understand," said Miss Davenport, Lord Montreuil has been ill some time; and that it was much against the consent

of his medical attendants, that he left Paris where the family were obliged on his account to remain some days. But the Earl was bent upon returning to England. Mrs. Cleveland told us, she understood from the messenger whom Lord d'Arcy sent to summons her husband, that his master bore the voyage, and subsequent journey to the castle, better than could be expected, considering the weak state he was in; but in an hour after his arrival, he was attacked with a fit, more violent than the last, and that Dr. Perceval, who was sent for, gives little hopes of the Earl's recovery, who appeared aware of his danger; for as soon as his senses returned, he gave directions for Mr. Cleveland's being instantly sent for.

Mr. Howard the next minute making his appearance, little aware who was in the drawing-room, was made acquainted with the arrival of the family at the castle, and the hopeless state of Lord Montreuil.

Much concerned to hear it, he instantly determined to ride over and learn a true statement of the case, apologizing therefore, to Mrs. Aukland, for leaving her at the moment she was expecting to receive a lesson in astronomy, he hastened to order his horse, and was soon on the road to d'Arcy castle.

Mrs. Aukland found Sophia so very dull of apprehension this morning, as she was endeavouring to teach her the celestial globe ; that her remark to her companions as they were returning home, was, she now firmly believed, what she had before heard asserted, that *bright eyes* were not always the sign of *intelligence*.

Edward and Emily did not make their appearance till dinner was on the table ; when Mrs. Howard and her sister, wanted not to be informed, that the parties had

come to an explanation, and that it had ended satisfactorily to both.

After receiving her cousin's congratulations upon it, Emily sat down to address her father and worthy governess, and for the first time confessed how much she had suffered on Edward's account ; but hoped now her late misery had so happily terminated, Sir Charles would hasten his return to Glenmore, and sanctioned by his approval the re-union of two hearts, which has so long and cruelly been separated.

Edward wrote at the same time to his uncle and to his father, desirous that neither the latter nor his mother, might remain a moment unnecessarily ignorant of his happiness.

Mr Howard did not return home before the evening. The Earl had been dead some hours before he reached the cas-

tle ; but Lord d'Arcy hearing he was in the house, made a point of seeing him. " My friend," continued Mr. Howard, " enquired very kindly after you, my dear Matilda and the children, he looks very thin, and has been dangerously ill. If he does not soon improve considerably in his looks, I shall begin to entertain serious apprehensions on his account."

Mrs. Howard expressed her concern at hearing so indifferent an account of her favorite Lord d'Arcy : and after making some farther enquiries relative to him, she expressed a wish to know, if her husband had seen any part of the Italian family ; and finding he had dined in company with them, desired to hear his opinion whether the young Laurina was as handsome as Mr. Cleveland had described her mother to have been.

Mr. Howard replied, he thought her the

most beautiful little brunette he had ever seen. "Her aunt," he continued, is very reserved at first, but this soon wears off; and d'Arcy assures me, the Signora is a most amiable woman. The Marchesa's manners on the contrary, are the easiest imaginable, they are perfectly foreign; he has evidently seen a great deal of life, and appears to possess an extensive knowledge of man kind. His dislike to his own country, is sometimes expressed in the bitterest terms, and from what he allowed to escape him, I think it probable he will settle for life in England?"

"And how did you find my friend-Lady Grace," enquired Sophia.

"I did not see her, as she remained with her mother. But I will tell you something my dear Sophia that I learned in the course of the day. Lord Deresford, who, I am informed, you dismissed from Longue-

ville, was met on his way to Paris by the Montreuil party, and I have reason to think, Lord d'Arcy has heard of your cruelty to his cousin, and is not quite pleased with you for it.

“What reasons had you for forming such a conclusion,” enquired Mrs. Howard?

“I saw him turn very red when I mentioned our sister's being at this time with us, and he never made any enquiries after her health.”

“What strange fancies you wise men take into your heads at times,” said Emily, I would bet any thing Lord d'Arcy——

“Lord Montreuil madam if you please.”

“Well then if you will have it so, Lord Montreuil did not allow Sophia's refusal

of his cousin to dwell an instant on his mind ”

“ I never patronize young ladies’ *betting*,” said Mr Howard smiling “ But I confess my curiosity is somewhat raised to discover, what has made you all at once so *very animated*, that you are not the same characters you were a week ago. Will you not explain the reason for this wonderful metamorphosis having taken place in so short a space of time ? he continued archly looking towards her, as he said this.

“ We will leave Edward to explain it to your satisfaction,” said Mrs. Howard smiling. “ It is late and I see Emily, as well as myself, begins to feel sleepy.”

Emily happy in an excuse to escape Mr. Howard, whose countenance betrayed his belief of an *eclaircissement* having taken

place between herself and cousin, seconded the motion for retiring to bed, and was accompanied by Sophia to her apartment. Emily feeling too happy to sleep, would have detained her some time longer, but Sophia reminding her of her engagement to walk with her brother before breakfast the next morning, persuaded her of the necessity there was for her taking some rest, and at length prevailed upon her to retire to bed.

From her cousin's room, she was proceeding to her sisters; but hearing Mr. Howard's voice, who was with Edward ascending the stairs, she changed her design and merely stopping to say good night, as she passed the door of Mrs. Howard's apartment, hastened onwards to her own.

CHAP. VI.



Sir Charles Rushbrook on the receipt of his daughter's letter hastened to Glenmore, and as the latter hoped, sanctioned an engagement, which for so many years he had accustomed himself to look forward to with so much delight. Sir Charles's disappointment had been severe, when he believed Edward no longer wished its fulfilment; his joy therefore was now proportionably great, at finding every impediment removed to the wish of his heart being gratified;

and when he placed the hand of his Emily in that of her lover; the emotion that overpowered him at that moment, from excess of happiness, almost prevented the blessings he bestowed upon them, from being distinctly heard by either.

Mr. and Mrs. De Clairville preceded the Marquis and his family to the grove: and by their presence, increased the general joy. Captain Rushbrook was immediately written to, and earnestly intreated to conclude his business at the admiralty, and hasten to join his family, who were now assembled at Glenmore.

Mr. De Clairville had heard of the death of the Earl, and now there was no impediment existing to Lord d'Arcy's declaring his attachment for his daughter, he naturally concluded it would not be very long before he made his appearance at the grove. But though Mr. Howard con-

tinued his visits at the castle, his friend had not been once to Glenmore, since his return to England.

Sophia had addressed a few lines to Lady Grace on the death of her father, and was beginning to feel surprized at never having received an answer from her, when Lady Caroline, who with her family had been at the grove some days came to seek her in her apartment, purposely to tell her of the arrival of the new Earl.

“His accession of dignity,” she continued, “does not, I assure you, sit very easy upon him; indeed he is so altered and so disagreeably, that you, I am sure my dear Sophia, would not know him again. He scarcely condescended to speak to my father, and as for poor Edgell, he appeared to regard him as entirely beneath his notice; who not expecting this alteration in his old acquaintance, held out his hand

to him on his entrance, expressing the pleasure he felt at seeing him again, when to his evident surprize, Lord Montreuil scarcely taking it, turned from him and addressed Mr. Howard. I really begin to think he gave orders to be denied to my father and brother when they called at the castle the day after the late Earl's funeral ; I remember the former thought it very odd at the time, that he was not admitted, why this should be, I am at a loss to account for, unless Lord Montreuil is apprehensive of Seymour's becoming his rival with the beautiful Italian, I know not what better reception you may meet with, from this haughty young nobleman, but I doubt it will not be very different from ours, for when my brother, in reply to your sisters enquiries, what had become of you, said, he believed you had on return from your walk retired to your room ; any one would have supposed the man had never heard of such a being as Sophia De Clair-

ville being in existence, because he abruptly turned away from Mrs Howard, with whom he had that minute before been conversing, and walked to a window and amused himself with watching clouds, which had never appeared, and in opening and shutting the sash continually. Tired of all this and withal excessively provoked that an additional title should turn a man's brain thus, I left the room, whither I am determined not to return till this *great* man has quitted it. You may do as you please.

“Then,” said Sophia attempting to smile, “I shall rest satisfied with remaining where I am. But my dear Lady Caroline, she continued are you quite certain Lord d’Arcy’s altered manner is alone to be traced to pride?”

“I know not,” she returned, “what else it can proceed from. I hear from all quarters how desperately smitten he is with

the young foreigner whom I earnestly hope will tease him to death. It was our intention to have called in a few days upon Lady Montreuil and her guests, but now, I do not expect my father will allow of our doing this; and as I confess I feel a little curiosity to take a peep at the beautiful Laurina, I am not a little provoked at Lord Montreuil's manner to day, bordering a little upon the insolent, which will probably prevent my desire being gratified."

"Lady Montreuil," replied Sophia faintly smiling, "has not offended you, neither has her daughter."

"True, they certainly have not, and on their account, we may be admitted to continue to visit at d'Arcy castle."

"The drawing-room door was soon after heard to open, and voices in the hall reached the ears of Lady Caroline and her companion.

“ He is gone at last,” cried the former, “ we may now safely venture to make our appearance below.”

“ Sophia saying she would follow her ladyship in a few minutes, remained behind to collect her scattered thoughts. The next instant she observed from the window Lady Lucretia crossing the lawn and feeling at that moment more disposed to join her than her sister (who had so unthinkingly been planting thorns in the bosom of one, she really was much attached to,) Sophia hastened to overtake her. In passing the door of the breakfast room, she thought she distinguished her nephew’s voice, and from the endearing tone he was speaking in, believing it was her mother who was with him, she gently entered the apartment, wishing to know, if she had not already been made acquainted with the unaccountable conduct of Lord d’Arcy during his visit. Who can describe her sensations

on discovering little Charles's caresses, had been lavished upon the young Earl, who was waiting in that apartment for Mr. Howard, to ride part of the way back with him to d' Arcy castle.

Hoping she had not been seen, Sophia retreated as rapidly as her trembling limbs would permit: and had reached the staircase, when Charles who had caught a glimpse of her figure overtook her and seizing her by the gown, endeavoured to draw her back, telling her as he did so, she must come and speak to his dear *Arthur*. As she vainly endeavoured to extricate herself from her nephew's grasp, her eyes met Lord d' Arcy's, who had followed Charles to the door of the breakfast room, and was earnestly regarding her. Angry with herself for allowing him one moment to suppose, she felt any mortification from his having been the first to break through an engagement, he had with so much difficulty pre-

vailed upon her to enter into, and determined he should no longer have reason for believing her so, she suffered Charles to lead her into the room, from which she had before so hastily retreated, and apologizing to Lord Montreuil for not having recognized him sooner, enquired after the health of his Mother, and sister.

“They are both well,” he returned, “and had they believed it possible you would have honored me by making enquiries, I feel assured that they would have desired me to have delivered their compliments in return.”

Sophia surprized at being answered thus, began almost to suspect his last illness, from which he indeed appeared scarcely recovered, had afflicted his senses, all her indignant feelings at his supposed fickleness fled in a moment, as she gently entreated to know what had induced him to believe, she did not now feel the same in-

terest for Lady Montreuil, and his sister, she had formerly done.

“Pardon me,” he answered, “if I have hurt you in any degree, by appearing to doubt your affection for my mother or sister. But I had forgotten it might be possible you still honored them with your regard notwithstanding you had withdrawn that, I once fondly hoped you had felt for myself. Oh! Sophia,” he continued, “is this the meeting I anticipated with so much delight! But I forget myself this is no longer the Sophia I left four months ago, who then appeared almost all my own. Oh no! it is *Lord Edgell’s*; and as such, she can enter little into the feelings of the despised, rejected d’ Arcy,”

“This is cruel, and unmanly my Lord,” returned Sophia in violent agitation. “to shield your own fickleness, by accusing me of having set you the example. I have in-

deed been mistaken," she continued, "in the character of him, I once," she hesitated, then added, "*esteemed*. You must recollect how unwillingly I entered into an engagement with you, unsanctioned by my family. It appears I had a presentiment of what was to follow. But think not for an instant my Lord," she added with dignity, "I lament its being dissolved, on the contrary I feel truly grateful to you for having restored me my liberty."

"And did you believe I had done this," said the young earl reproachfully, "when you promised your hand to Lord Edgell.?"

Sophia felt too indignant at what she supposed a mean subterfuge to escape the opprobrium of having deserted her for another, to return any answer to this speech. Taking the hand of Charles, who had all the time been wondering what his aunt and Arthur, had been quarrelling about, she

wished his Lordship a good morning, and was hurrying from him; but the latter followed her into the hall, and was again on the point of addressing her, as Lord Edgell entered from the lawn, who observing Sophia looked pale fearing she was not well, hastily advanced, and in the most friendly manner expressed his hope, she had not suffered from the long walk she had taken with him, in the early part of the morning.

At sight of him his rival Lord Moutreuil started as if an adder had crossed his path and without speaking to him, instantly quitted the hall.

Lord Edgell did not appear to have noticed the young Earl's abrupt exit, and Sophia hoped it had escaped his observation: she thanked him for his kind solicitude about her assuring him the walk had not the least fatigued her, and that he would

find her ready to accompany him in a much longer one the next day. Then apologizing for quitting him as she had letters to answer by return of post; she left Charles with him and retired to her own apartment where she gave a full vent to her tears, which had with some difficulty been suppressed whilst with Lord Edgell.

“And thus ends my every hope of happiness!” she sobbingly exclaimed as she threw herself into a chair “Oh! Lord d’Arcy she continued,” had any one told me you would have acted thus, should I have given any credit to the tale? on the contrary, I could scarcely have forgiven them for endeavouring to infuse so terrible a suspicion into my mind. She continued to weep some time in silence, till recollecting if she did not attend to recover some degree of composure, before she was seen by Lady Carline, she would most certainly suspect her tears were shed on Lord

d'Arcy's account. She therefore hastened to banish all traces of them, by bathing her eyes and arranging her hair, which she had scarcely accomplished, before the light steps of a female was heard approaching. The voice, in claiming admittance, proved to be Emily's, who hearing on her return from a ride she had been taking with Edward, of Lord Montreuil's visit, and his strange behaviour, dreading the effect it might produce on Sophia, came to seek her. For some time after she entered, Emily confined herself to descriptions of the scenery she had been most struck with in her ride; till perceiving from the restlessness of her companion, she could no longer hope to fix her attention on indifferent subjects, she ventured to enquire if she had seen Lord Montreuil, whom she understood, she said, had been at Glenmore in her absence.

Sophia attempting to speak with steady-

ness, replied, "and you have probably heard my dear Emily, of the wonderful alteration that has, in a few months, taken place in him. In short," she continued, "that in *Lord Montreuil*, there is no resemblance to be traced to the late Lord d'Arcy."

"Of course then you saw him my dear Sophia," returned her cousin, "to make this observation."

"I certainly did," she replied, "but not in the presence of any of the family: little Charles was alone present at our interview."

Sophia then attempted to give Emily some account of what had been passing in the breakfast-room between her and Lord Montreuil. But the latter could learn little more, than that the time they were together, was spent in mutual reproaches.

Sophia forgot, at the moment she was relating the passing scene, her cousin was ignorant of that which had taken place in Seymour street, the last evening of her being in Town. Emily having been made acquainted with the particulars of her interview with Lord d'Arcy in Major Singleton's library, said, "It does not strike me as being so *very* improbable my dear Sophia, that Lord Montreuil has been led to believe, that you are really engaged to Lord Edgell: Lady Caroline makes no scruple of mentioning her hopes of seeing you her brother's wife; and I know the company, who were staying in the house with you at Longueville, were all in the same error, the Earl is at this moment, supposing you are to be the future Marchioness" But in vain did Emily attempt to persuade her cousin of the probability of the young earl's being under any mistake. She was assured he merely made it an excuse for his

own inconstancy, and would not hear a word in his defence. Miss Rushbrook had at length the pleasure of finding her more calm, though not more lenient to Lord Montreuil, whom Sophia said she hoped never to see again.

Little Charles was soon after heard begging to be admitted, and running past Emily, who had risen to open the door for him, he approached his aunt; when earnestly regarding her, and observing the traces of tears still visible, he begged she would not cry any more, as he was quite sure *Arthur* was not very angry with her.

Sophia, exceedingly apprehensive that her nephew might betray to the family her meeting with his friend, and mention the effect it had produced upon her, now endeavoured to persuade him, that her tears had not been occasioned by the anger of Lord Montreuil.

“Then what has made you cry so, aunt Sophy?” he enquired.

“Your aunt is not very well to-day Charles,” returned Emily, “and cannot bear much talking: we had therefore better, I think, leave her to lie down for a short time.”

“But let me remain behind,” said Charles. “I promise to be very quiet, and will not even *breathe*, if I can help it. Aunt Sophy,” he continued caressingly. “Will you not let me be with you, and nurse you, as you did me, last summer?”

Sophia smiling, assured him, she should be very glad of his company, but as her head was better, she should have no occasion to make a nurse of him.

“I am glad it is better,” he continued,

as jumping on her lap, he threw his little arms around her, and reclined his head on her bosom: but soon taking it off, he looked again in her face, and seeing the tears still rising to her eyes, his own filled also, which Sophia perceiving, made a great effort to disperse hers, and smiling upon him, enquired where he had left Lord Edgell.

“ In Papa’s study,” he replied, “ very unhappy from seeing you look so.”

“ Surely he did not discover that I was so,” said Sophia with great emotion.

“ Yes but he did, indeed,” returned Charles, “ for he asked me what was the matter with you.”

“ And what answer did you return his Lordship ?”

“I told him,” said Charles, “I believed you were only sorry for something Arthur had been saying to you, for I would not say you had been quarrelling.”

“You should not my dear Charles, indeed you should not, have told Lord Edgell so. I was not sorry for what Lord d’Arcy said to me.”

“Then you were angry with him?”

“Nor yet angry with him,” she answered, blushing for her disengenuousness.

“Were you not really? then I will tell Lord Edgell when I next see him you love Arthur still.”

“No, no my dear Charles, you must not tell him so.”

Charles now looked evidently surprized,

wondering what his aunt wished him to say or do; which Emily observing, told him there was not any occasion for his mentioning the subject again to his Lordship, unless he put any more questions to him, in that case, he was to answer, that he knew nothing more of the matter.

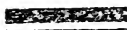
Mr. and Mrs. De Clairville returned from a morning visit they had been making in the neighbourhood, only in time to dress for dinner. Sophia had scarcely a minute to inform her mother of Lord Montreuil's visit, and that from his altered manner, she was led to suppose he no longer wished her to consider herself engaged to him. She prepared Mrs. De Clairville to expect many remarks would be made at table on his strange behaviour during his visit, which in fact was the case; Lady Caroline giving it as her opinion, that his new title had certainly turned his brain.

After dinner Emily followed her aunt to her apartment ; and Mrs. De Clairville on hearing what had passed in her daughter's interview with the young Earl, perfectly agreed with her niece in believing his reproaches had been occasioned from the report having reached him of Sophia's engagement to Lord Edgell. Time she hoped, would discover to him the fallacy of it ; for Mrs. De Clairville believed not for a moment, his attachment to Lady Laurina, as had that been the fact, the young Earl would have avoided Mr. Howard, with as much care as the rest of the family ; as his affection for Sophia, he must suppose, would incline him to resent any slight put upon her.

Mrs. De Clairville and Emily therefore united in thinking it was far better to leave Lord Montreuil to find out his error, than for them in any way to attempt to undeceive him, returned again to the drawing-

room, where they found Lady Caroline was for the amusement of the company, re-acting the scene, that had passed that morning in the same apartment. Sophia happily had escaped this, by retiring as soon as she left the table to the nursery; and when she again made her appearance, her ladyship tired with her exertions, was quietly seated with Mr. Cecil on a sofa, and the new Earl's name was not mentioned any more that evening.

CHAP. VI.



The following Sunday, the party at the Grove, prepared to attend church at I.—, as was the custom in Mr. Howard's family when there was no service at Glenmore: after which they proceeded to the rectory, accompanied by the Davenports, Mrs. Auckland and Ormsdy Willoughby, who after chatting some little time with them, returned to the Hall.

“ I am happy to find,” said Mr. Cleveland, as he returned from handing the ladies to their carriage, that our friend has captivated so excellent a young man as Mr. Willoughby is represented to me. I have just learned from her mother, that my services will soon be required to tie the happy knot.

“ I had not the least idea the wedding would take place so soon,” observed Mrs. Howard, “ as it is scarcely a fortnight since I first suspected an attachment between the parties.”

“ We have reason to suppose, it commenced early in the summer,” returned Mrs. Cleveland, “ and that it met with every encouragement from the friends of both.”

“ How seldom is this the case,” said Lord Edgell.

“ I confess myself surprized at hearing such a remark from you Seymour,” returned the Marquis smiling ; when I know not the woman you would present to me as my future daughter, that would be rejected by me.”

Lord Edgell in great emotion, seized the hand of his father : but instantly dropping it, he turned to a window, and began admiring the prospect from it.

The Marquis felt some astonishment at the emotion his son had betrayed, which he tried to account for in vain. If he was attached to any woman, he believed it was to Sophia ; who, he must be convinced, would be received into the family with approbation and delight. Lady Caroline interrupted his meditations, by enquiring of Mr. Cleveland when Lord Montreuil was to lead to the altar the beautiful Italian.

“ If,” he returned, “ your Ladyship alludes to the Lady Laurina, I do not think that time will ever come.”

“ What,” said Lady Caroline looking incredulously, “ do you mean to affirm that the young Earl is not going to marry the Lady Laurina ?”

“ Such was my intention I confess,” he smilingly replied. “ Therefore if your ladyship, feared the beautiful Italian, as you term her, was the only impediment in your way to the heart of my young friend, you may now commence your attack upon it, without any fear of Lady Laurina proving any obstacle to your design.”

“ I can truly assure you,” she returned laughing, “ I have no intention of storming the citadel, even could you convince me there was no remaining obstacle to prevent

my attempting it," she continued, directing an arch look towards Sophia. "And so this little fascinating Laurina, for fascinating I know she is, if she really, as I suspect, proves to be the *ci-devant* mistress of our little Flora, has made no impression on the heart of your late pupil ? "

"Not perhaps the *impression*, your ladyship alludes to ; yet he has a most sincere regard for her, and as she is a protestant — ."

"A *protestant*," re-echoed Lord Edgell. "Is it possible that Lady Laurina can be of that persuasion."

"She certainly is," returned Mr. Cleveland, considerably surprized at the question. "And I was going my Lord to observe, as such was the fact, the friends of my late pupil, would have been happy had his Lordship entertained a tenderer sentiment

for this amiable young woman, than that which he professes himself to feel for her."

Lord Edgell without appearing to have attended to the latter part of Mr Cleveland's speech, rose from his seat and continued some time, to pace the limits of the apartment, evidently lost to all around him. An enquiry from his father, if he had ever seen the Lady Laurina, restored him to his recollection; and his answer was in the affirmative.

"Why you never mentioned this to us, my dear Seymour, when Flora was giving us a description of her young lady," said his youngest sister.

Lord Edgell colouring highly, answered, that he was not then quite certain Flora's mistress and the Lady Laurina he had become acquainted with in Italy, were one and the same person.

“ Indeed ! then pray may I enquire, how you came thus suddenly to be enlightened on the subject ? ”

The Marquis observed the encreasing confusion of his son, entreated his daughter by a sign, to drop the conversation, which she instantly did, and the discourse soon took another direction.

Sophia could scarcely believe she had understood Mr. Cleveland aright when he so seriously assured Lady Caroline, there was no truth in the report of Lord Montreuil's preference for the youthful Italian. Was it possible she had been guilty of injustice towards the man, whom, of all others, she had hitherto thought the most highly. Here the whole truth at once flashed across her mind. His coolness to the Marquis, and his altered manner to Lord Edgell, had been probably occasioned by the report he might have heard of an engagement sub-

sisting between the latter nobleman and herself. But how was it possible for Lord d'Arcy, for by that name she alone thought of him, to give such a rumour credit for a single instant. Her heart the next moment told her, that she had been equally guilty in believing his affections were so soon transferred to another. And now perhaps this unhappy misunderstanding might never be cleared up.

Mr. Cleveland, she was convinced, from the look he had directed to her, when answering Lady Caroline, was not unacquainted with his young friend's former attachment; as she had translated it, as one, intended to convey reproach to her, for having used the young Earl so ill. Silent therefore, and dejected she remained till the arrival of the carriage to convey them back to Glenmore. Mr Cleveland remarked it and his heart relented; that heart, which had been the last few days steeled against

her ; and as she rose to follow her sisters to her Barouche, he observed, whilst a smile was on the lips of the fair inconstant, as he believed her to be, there was a tear in her eye, and as he took her hand to lead her forwards, he could not resist saying in a low voice, “ may I believe that tear was shed for my pupil ? ” The next moment he repented his indiscretion, as Sophia no longer able to retain any composure, threw herself on the bosom of Mrs. Howard and burst into tears.

Her sister in great alarm, entreated to know what was the matter.

“ The heat of the church, has, I make no doubt, affected Miss DeClairville,” said Mrs. Cleveland, “ I saw her change colour more than once, after she returned to the house; but fearing to alarm you, I would not take any notice of it. Had you not,” she continued, “ better leave your sister

with us for the day? she will be much more tranquil here, than with so large a party at home."

Mr. Cleveland warmly seconded this proposal of his wife's, and Mrs. Howard, assured Sophia that she could not meet with a better nurse than Mrs. Cleveland, and left her to the care of this worthy woman, promising to send the carriage for her early in the evening.

As soon as she had left the house, Mrs. Cleveland prevailed upon her young guest to lie down for an hour, promising to call her after her return from afternoon service, when dinner would be served.

Sophia being left alone, wept for some time unrestrainedly. She now blamed herself severely, for allowing her quick sense of the supposed injury she had received from Lord Montreuil, so entirely to take posses-

sion of her mind, that his distress, which she now remembered being so very apparent, was not attended to at the time, or thought of for a moment. It was very probable, she began to think, that he had heard from Lord Deresford her supposed engagement to Lord Edgell; as she was perfectly convinced the former had left Longuevill under this delusion, from her not daring to undeceive him, fearing his suspicions would then rest upon his cousin, whose conduct was now fully justified to her, though she dared not indulge a hope, that hers would ever be to him.

With such distressing reflections, Sophia's time was passed till Mrs. Cleveland returned from church; who immediately joining her, was grieved to find the little benefit her patient had derived from her prescription. In a few minutes afterwards Mr. Cleveland gently knocking at the door, claimed admittance; "have you my dear,"

he said as he entered, "prepared our young friend to meet a fourth at table?"

"You followed me so quickly," Mrs. Cleveland smiling replied, "I had no time for doing this."

"It is indeed of little consequence," he returned, "as I feel assured our new guest will not be considered in the light of an intruder by any of us. But can you not my love," he continued, "furnish a little rouge for these pale cheeks?" and as he said this he paternally pressed his lips to Sophia's.

"You have made that unnecessary," said his wife smiling, "as the rose has already taken place of the lily: but my dear," she proceeded, "are we not guilty of inattention to our friend below, in leaving him so long alone?"

“ I know not but it may appear to him in this light,” replied Mr. Cleveland, “we will therefore hasten to offer apologies for our great remissness.

Sophia who had expected to find Mr. Deloraine with the guest below, as he usually called at the rectory, on his return from one of his churches ; followed her worthy hosts into the parlour very composedly ; soon however this vanished, for instead of Mr. Deloraine she saw lord Montreuil, who equally surprized at finding her at the rectory, advanced to meet her, and in an embarrassed manner enquired after her health.

Scarcely able to support herself, much less to speak, Sophia could only curtsey to him, and it was happy for her, that Mrs Cleveland the next moment called upon her, to place herself next to her at table, desiring her young friend to remember her sister

had entrusted her solely with her, at the same time adding, "not even Mr Cleveland shall interfere in my management of you this day, and therefore leave him my dear and sit by me."

"Upon my word," said her husband laughing, "you set Miss De Clairville an excellent pattern for managing at any rate a husband, perhaps you would have no objection to extend your jurisdiction over his Lordship also?"

"I will with pleasure resign myself into Mrs. Cleveland's hands," said Lord Montreuil smiling, "provided she will take upon herself the management of so troublesome a being."

"My wife at all events will know whom she has to deal with," said Mr Cleveland smiling; "for remember my good

sir, it is not so many years since you were under her care ”

“ I should desire Mrs. Cleveland to forget it.” he replied, had I forgotten the many happy days, I passed under this roof.

“ And can you not also assert, they were the happiest of your life ?” said Mr. Cleveland smiling significantly.

“ I can now with truth declare they certainly were, and very often look back to them with regret ; then every thing smiled upon me, now——

“ Come, come,” said Mrs. Cleveland, “ I will have no recurring thus to unpleasant reflections. To-morrow,” she added smiling, “ I promise if you are here, to listen patiently to all your tales of woe, and if it will conduce in the smallest degree to your happiness, to return you sigh for sigh.”

“ He jests at scars, that never felt a wound,” replied Lord Montreuil a little reproachfully.

“ I could contradict the poet’s assertion,” said Mrs. Cleveland, “ by relating some particulars of my own life. But not to day,” she continued laughing, observing the young Earl and Sophia looking towards her with expectation strongly marked in their countenances, hoping to hear something similar to their own case ; though neither suspecting the other, of feeling interested on this account, in the tale they were longing to hear, “ remember my lord, you have put yourself under my direction till the sun goes down, it is therefore my desire you will accompany me and Miss De Clairville in a walk which we are now going to prepare for.”

Lord Montreuil laughing, bowed submissively, though evidently disappointed

Mrs. Cleveland would not gratify him by relating the history of the early part of her life.

Mrs. Cleveland would not hear of Sophia's remaining within, but insisted upon it, that a walk would be of essential service to her, in bracing-up her nerves, which appeared so much to want it; and again reminding her that she would be obeyed that day, she called upon the Earl, who instantly obeyed her summons, and apologizing for Mr. Cleveland's not being able to join the party, from having been sent for to attend the sick bed of one of his parishioners, she accepted his offered arm, and desiring Sophia to take the other, who very reluctantly complied with this command, thus arranged they set forth on their ramble.

In crossing a style, which separated a field through which they had passed,

from the road, Sophia felt Lord Montréuil's hand, as he assisted her over it, tremble excessively, she was sensible her own had not been very steady before, and this did not contribute to make it more so.

Mrs. Cleveland was obliged to find conversation for all ; but at length perceiving her exertions were in vain, she gave up the attempt ; and in silence the walk was concluded,

The garden belonging to the rectory was laid out in much taste, and though not of great extent had the appearance of being so. At one end was a summer house with a veranda, around the pillars of which climbed the sweet clematis and woodbine, which were at this time in perfect bloom.

To this favorite spot Mrs. Cleveland led her guests before they adjourned to the

house, wishing to point out some improvement that she had made in it, since Lord Montreuil had last visited it. While Sophia was expressing her admiration of such a collection of sweets, a servant came to summons his mistress, to a poor woman, who was waiting to speak with her; and Mrs. Cleveland apologizing for being obliged to quit her companions, followed the man, leaving Lord Montreuil and Sophia to entertain themselves as well as they could in her absence.

The latter instantly proposed returning to the house, where she thought it probable they should find the master, but Lord Montreuil entreated that she would give him her attention for a few minutes. "I will not detain you longer," he said as a faint and momentary smile appeared on his countenance, from observing Sophia to hesitate. "But this is probable the last time we may

meet, and I would therefore wish to take this opportunity of imploring your forgiveness for what escaped me, when I so unexpectedly beheld you at Glenmore ; I was not then master of myself, indeed it was some time after I left the house before I regained my senses. I now feel the absurdity, to call it by no harsher name, of my behaviour at that time. Will you allow me to hope that my offence is forgiven, and that though you no longer retain those sentiments which I once imagined you felt for me ; you will still interest yourself in one who will not be entirely miserable while he carries with him the idea that he is not totally forgotten by you.

“ You answer not,” he continued after a pause, in which the violence of Sophia’s emotion prevented her from speaking. “ And is this poor consolation to be denied me. Then be it so. If my offence be unpardonable, let me bear my punish-

ment with fortitude. Farewell then, dearest Sophia," he cried in a voice almost indistinct from excess of emotion, "and when distant oceans separate us, it is not impossible but you may relent, and sometimes remember with compassion, him, who can never offend you more." Saying this, and seizing the end of her scarf, he raised it a moment to his lips, and was hurrying from the garden, when a faint shriek arrested his flight, and the next moment he beheld Sophia fall senseless at his feet. "Merciful God!" he cried, as he raised her from the ground and bore her into the summer house, "have I been all this time in an error? Is it possible that she is yet my own Sophia, and not, as I was induced to believe, Lord Edgeil's?"

In vain he endeavoured for some time to recover her from her swoon; she still continued insensible. His alarm now amounting to agony, he rose with the in-

tention of calling some assistance, at that moment Sophia opening her eyes, faintly articulated his name ; and as her recollection returned, perceiving by whom she was supported, she tried to disengage herself from his arms ; but finding the effort too great, her head again sunk upon his bosom, as she burst into tears. Lord Montreuil suffered them to flow some time without interruption, and when she became a little calmer, he prevailed upon her to give him the assurance that he was still beloved by her.

Mutual explanations followed this tender scene, and Lord Montreuil was made acquainted with her reasons for permitting his cousin to leave Longueville, in the error he had imbibed relative to her engagement with Lord Edgell.

Mrs. Cleveland's patience was on the point of being completely exhausted, as

her guests returned from the garden. "I began to feel apprehensive that you had been surfeited by the sweets around my bower," said she, looking archly towards them; "and just as you made your appearance, was requesting Mr. Cleveland to hasten to your assistance."

"You were then groundlessly alarmed my dear madam," returned Lord Montreuil smiling. "I at least was so charmed with your fairy retreat, that had not my companion reminded me of the time, and expressed her fears you were waiting tea for us, I might possibly have remained there very contentedly till midnight."

"And were you my dear Miss De Clairville, in as great raptures with my wife's summer house, as his Lordship appears to be?" enquired Mr. Cleveland archly.

"I so much admire the clematis, that

flourishes about it," returned Sophia blushing, "that I shall ask Mrs. Cleveland for a cutting of it to plant in my favorite retreat at Melcombe."

"That when you scent its fragrance, it may bring to your recollection the pleasant hours you have spent with Lord Montreuil in this?"

Sophia now blushing very deeply, endeavoured to change the conversation, but the Earl as he tenderly pressed her hand said, "I have every reason to love that sweet flower, it shall adorn the walls of the old castle, and from henceforth be always cherished by me."

Mr. Cleveland had not any occasion to be informed, that the summer house had witnessed a reconciliation between these two amiable young persons. The joy that danced in the eyes and played on every

feature of Lord Montreuil's, told him at the first glance all was right. And though Sophia's cheek was still pale, he no longer perceived that deep despondency, he had with such commiseration read in her countenance at dinner.

When candles were brought in, Lord Montreuil remarked her colourless cheeks; and alarmed lest she should suffer materially from her late agitation, he drew Mr. Cleveland aside, and partly explaining what had passed, entreated him to prevail on his guest to remain at the rectory that night.

Mrs. Cleveland becoming acquainted with the late indisposition of Sophia, was urgent with her to send the carriage back empty; but anxious to return to Glenmore that she might relieve her mother's apprehensions on her account, she steadily resisted the importunities of her friends.

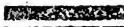
Edward arrived soon after to escort his sister home. He appeared surprised at finding Lord Montreuil at the rectory: nor was it lessened by observing the intimate terms he and Sophia were upon. The latter by her brother's desire hastened to tie on her bonnet, in which arduous task she was assisted by the young Earl, who took this opportunity of entreating her for his sake, to take great care of herself, expressing his hopes of seeing her in the morning looking much better than she did that evening.

Sophia laughingly accused him of great deficiency in gallantry, to think of insinuating to a female, she was not at any time in perfect beauty.

Edward again entreated his sister to be expeditious as it was late, and his mother was anxiously expecting them, Sophia immediately answered she was ready to at-

tend him, and taking an affectionate leave of Mr and Mrs. Cleveland, whom she thanked again and again for their kind care of her ; she was assisted into the carriage by Lord Montreuil, who again entreating her to take care of herself, tenderly pressed her hand as he bade her good night, and then returned to his worthy friends, whose guests he remained till morning.

CHAP. VI.



Sophia on arriving at Glenmore instantly retired to her room, where she was soon joined by her mother, who hearing her daughter was returned came to seek her.

Sophia on seeing her enter, instantly threw herself into her arms, and called upon her for her congratulations upon the termination of her late sufferings on Lord Montreuil's account. Mrs. De Clairville pressing her darling to her bosom, desired

to learn, when and where an *acclaircissement* had taken place between her and the Earl, when Sophia briefly related the particulars of that eventful day, and her mother gathering from it how much she had gone through in the course of it, was very apprehensive that she would receive injury from the effects of her late sufferings.

Sophia's assurances that she never felt better, could scarcely quiet her maternal fears. A message was soon delivered by Margaret from the party below, entreating to hear how Miss De Clairville found herself; which Sophia found some difficulty in prevailing upon her mother to answer in person: notwithstanding she promised immediately to retire to bed.

Lord Edgell who had not been seen since he mounted his horse at the gate of the rectory, made his appearance in the drawing room a few minutes after Mrs. De Clair-

ville returned to it ; when Lady, Caroline in her eagerness to learn where her brother had passed the day, forgot Sophia.

Edward had mentioned to Emily his surprize at finding Lord Montreuil at Mr. Cleveland's ; his attentions to his sister he could not help remarking, and he now requested her to tell him, if she had ever suspected an attachment between them. Miss Rushbrook finding they had met, and believing from the account her cousin gave her of the excellent terms they were upon, that an explanation had taken place, no longer hesitated confiding to him, the long protracted misery of his sister and the Earl. When she had finished her little tale, which had called forth Edward's sympathy for Sophia, she entreated him to be silent for the present on his meeting with Lord Montreuil at the rectory : assigning Lady Caroline's love for tormenting, as her reason for making the request.

Lord Edgell merely replied to the numberless enquiries made by his sister, relative to his having absented himself so long, that he had been visiting an old friend; and the latter finding she could not prevail upon him to say who, or what this friend was, desisted from the attempt.

Mrs. De Clairville had allayed the fears which her husband and the Howard's had entertained on Sophia's account, by telling them she felt no doubt the latter would be able, after a good night's rest to join the family as usual, at breakfast the next morning.

Emily before she retired to bed, heard from her aunt, the particulars of what had been passing at the rectory, and her joy was great at finding that all now appeared to be in a train for ending happily. She was about to leave the apartment of Mrs. De Clairville, as her uncle entered it, who was now also made acquainted with Sophia's

late interview with the Earl. In mutual congratulations another hour passed by unheeded. Mr De Clairville was the first to remind them of it; and tenderly embracing his niece, he resigned her to the arms of his wife, who entreating her forgiveness for having kept her up beyond her usual hours, affectionately kissed her and dismissed her to bed.

* * * * *

Sophia on opening her eyes the next morning, found Emily by her bedside, whose expressive countenance told her she was not ignorant of the events of the last day. Margaret was dismissed, and after an hour's confidential chat, the cousins descended to breakfast, and Sophia received the congratulations of all assembled round the table on her recovered looks.

Whilst they were yet at breakfast Lord

Montreuil was announced, and the next moment made his appearance.

“ Bless me ! ” cried Lady Caroline, “ what can possibly have brought his lordship here at so early an hour ? now Sophia,” she continued in a low voice, “ you will have an opportunity of convincing yourself my late assertion of his altered manner was perfectly just.” But who can describe the astonishment of her ladyship, when the earl, instead of passing her brother as she expected with a freezing bow, extended his hand to him as he entered, which was cordially taken by Lord Edgell; and then advanced to the table, and after paying his compliments to all seated, stationed himself at the back of Sophia’s chair, and in a tone of the greatest interest enquired after her health, who not daring to raise her eyes, fearing the observations of the company were directed towards her, answered him in so low a voice, that a lover’s

ear could alone have understood what she said.

The marquis who was sitting next her, smilingly offered his seat to the earl; upon his declining it, Lady Caroline invited him to sit between herself and friend. This last offer could not possibly be refused. His Lordship had breakfasted at the Rectory, but would not refuse the cup of coffee Mrs. Howard had poured out for him. Anxious to prevent Sophia's feeling any embarrassment, he seldom addressed himself to her; she felt the delicacy of his conduct, and soon recovered her accustomed ease.

Mrs. Howard mentioned her intention of calling at d'Arcy castle that morning, and requested Lord Montreuil to tell her if he thought their visit would be agreeable to his mother.

He answered her in the affirmative, and

then turning to Sophia he enquired if she intended to be one of the party.

Sophia replied, this was the first moment she had heard of her sister's intention of paying her respects to Lady Montreuil that morning.

“Then may I request,” he said, “you will make some excuse for not accompanying her in her visit to day.

“To be ingenuous,” she returned, “I should have done so, had you not requested it.”

“You expect my mother and sister first to call on you.”

“Indeed you have mistaken my meaning, if you interpreted my speech thus. I should have the greatest pleasure in accompanying my sister to the castle, but that,”

she continued, hesitating a little, "I am not quite certain either your mother or sister would receive me with their former cordiality."

Lord Montreuil was prevented replying which he was on the point of doing, by Mr. Howard's calling him to give his opinion of a horse he had lately purchased for his wife's use, and the two gentlemen left the room to look at it.

"And so Merlin, has again made his appearance at the old castle," said Lady Caroline as the door closed upon them, "and has disenchanted the noble Earl. "Oh, what a change is here my countrymen! since Thursday last," she continued. "Why this is actually the same Lord d'Arcy we remember some months back, taking by storm the hearts of old and young, gentle and simple. I suspect Sophia, this little one of yours," placing her hand on

her friend's, "still flutters at his approach." The latter part of this speech was addressed in somewhat a lower voice, and happily for Sophia was not overheard by any one.

Mrs. Howard now enquired, who was inclined to accompany her that morning to d'Arcy castle. "You of course my dear Sophia," she continued addressing her sister.

"You must indeed excuse me my dear Matilda," she replied, "for my head does not yet feel equal to going into company."

"I am sorry to hear you say so," returned her sister; "surely you ought to have some advice."

"She has already received some," said Lady Caroline, turning an arch glance upon Sophia, "and which I believe she is determined to follow."

Sophia suspecting her ladyship had overheard the earl's request to avoid if possible, being of the party that morning, said whilst a blush crimsoned her cheeks, she believed quiet, would be of more service to her, than all the medicines Mr. Proby could send from his shop.

“ A quiet tête-à-tête with a certain gentleman, will, I doubt not, produce the happiest effect,” whispered Lady Caroline. “ Come then my dear Mrs. Howard,” she continued aloud, “ let us leave your sister to the quiet she is so desirous of finding, and prepare for our morning's visit.”

As Sophia was leaving the breakfast room, she was met by her mother, who telling her Lord Montreuil was with her father in the library, invited her to take a stroll with her in the park. Sophia enquired for Charles, and understanding he was equipping himself to walk with them,

she returned to her chamber for her hat and parasol, and on the stairs met her nephew, who was seeking her.

In less than half an hour they were joined by Mr. De Clairville and his companion, whose appearances created the liveliest joy in the young Charles. He ran towards Lord Montreuil, and jumping into his arms, expressed all the pleasure he felt at the meeting. After caressing his lordship some time, he said in a low voice to him, "I hope you and aunt Sophy have made it up; she was very unhappy at having quarrelled with you, and cried a great deal, but you must not tell her I said so."

Lord Montreuil made Charles happy by assuring him, his aunt and he were again good friends, and by promising never to make her cry again, but to love her even more than he did himself.

Mr. De Clairville silently joining the hands of his esteemed young friend and his daughter, internally invoked a blessing upon them both, and scarcely allowing his wife to give her hand to his Lordship in token of amity, he drew her away, taking little Charles with him.

Sophia now found why Lord Montreuil had requested her to excuse herself from being of the party to the castle that morning. His misery at the intelligence Lord Deresfurd had given him of her supposed engagement to Lord Edgell, could not be hidden from the watchful eye of his mother whose anger at Sophia's supposed fickleness, was warmly participated by her daughter : so that when the latter received her friends letter, soon after her father's death, she could scarcely refrain from returning an answer to it filled with reproaches. To write as she had been accustomed to do, Lady Grace found was

impossible ; she therefore determined upon not writing at all.

“ You may expect to see my sister here to morrow,” continued Lord Montreuil, after relating the above, “as I know she will be eager to atone for the offence which she has been guilty of towards you. May I not relieve her mind my Sophia, by assuring her that you have pardoned it?”

“ Indeed you may,” she replied, “ and likewise add, that I should not have loved her so well, had she continued to honor one with her regard, whom she had reason to believe had used her brother so ill.”

Lord Montreuil could only answer this speech by pressing to his lips the hand that rested on his arm. “ My Sophia” at length said, “ we will no longer advert to that time, which now to think

of, only produces painful sensations. So sudden was the change from misery to happiness, that when you left me last night, I could scarcely persuade myself that I was not in a dream; and it is with some difficulty that I can now believe I am awake, and that this precious hand is in reality promised to me. In short" he continued smiling, "if I were to die,

" 'Twere now to be most happy, for I find,
" My soul hath her content so absolutely,
That not another comfort like to this
Exceeds in unknown fate."

You must not now attempt to banish me from your presence. I shall henceforth be like a miser watching over his treasure, fearful of its being snatched away. I hope you do not wish to discard me?"

"You appear to have made yourself

very sure I do not," said Sophia smiling, "but I feel every possible inclination to mortify your vanity by insisting upon your leaving me instantly."

"But if I should doubt the sincerity of this decree!"

"Your vanity is incurable I fear," said Sophia laughing, "and I begin to feel serious apprehensions that I can make nothing of you; but must be obliged to consign you to my friend Lady Caroline, who, if any one can, will keep you in order."

"If you have not the power of making me all you wish," he tenderly returned, "I fear it will be in vain to seek for another to perform his arduous task; therefore leave I pray, Lady Caroline to subdue Mr. Cecil, whom I suspect she holds in her chains."

“And which he appears to be little inclined to break,” returned Sophia.

“Possibly not, but let us not talk any more of her or them: I would fix your attention at this moment on another subject. You will not I trust, my Sophia, long postpone that day which will give me a legal right to call you my own.”

“You are an encroacher, I fear,” she returned, as blushing deeply she turned her face from his ardent gaze; “for do you recollect that it is but a few months ago, since you told me, that would I but give you hope, you could wait like another Shalum, or wear your chains with pleasure twenty years more at least.”

“Let them be the silken ones of Hymen,” returned the Earl, “and I will most willingly promise to wear them for life.”

After a little altercation on this subject, Sophia was at length prevailed upon to allow his Lordship's placing his cause into the hands of her father; and after passing almost all the morning together, Lord Montreuil returned home, and by his presence restored cheerfulness, created the greatest joy in the bosom of his mother and sister; the latter promising to accompany her brother the following morning to Glenmore, and if possible persuade Sophia to spend a few days at the castle.

CHAP. IX.



Sophia had scarcely reached her apartment after the Earl had left her, before the party returned from their morning's excursion; and the Ladies Selburne with Emily soon claimed admittance into her presence.

“Sophia!” cried Lady Caroline, “what a scene you have lost, by not accompanying us to d’Arcy castle this morning. You, however, think I know, that you have been far better amused in listening to the tender

speech of his Lordship, who this moment passed us on his return home. But let me hasten to give you an account of our reception at that ancient edifice.

“We made a circuitous tour to the castle, and I began to be heartily tired before we completed our journey. Mr. Cecil who kept pace with the carriage, amused us as well as he could, but the roads were so intolerably rough, that he could not always make himself heard, and my poor lungs were quite exhausted before we had reached our destination.”

“Sophia would willingly excuse them at this moment, I suspect,” returned her sister laughing; “you forget your Mr. Cecil does not quite so much interest her, as he does yourself; besides, I thought, my dear Caroline, that you were going to give an account of what passed while we were at the castle, and not what occurred in our way to that noble mansion.”

“Notwithstanding that, my dear Lucretia,” said Lady Caroline, “you must allow me to proceed in my own way, or like Sancho and his goats, I shall lose my reckoning, or rather close my history so, that Sophia after all may never hear it.”

Her sister smiling, promised to give her no further interruption, and Lady Caroline thus resumed her relation. “On arriving at the castle we were ushered into Lady Montreuil’s dressing room, who really looks remarkably well in her weeds. Lady Grace soon made her appearance, but to my surprize neither of them enquired, my dear Sophia, after you.”

Sophia smiled, but did not reply; and her friend proceeded in her tale.

We continued chatting some time, but still saw nothing of the Italian family. My father enquired for the Marchese; and

was answered that he was well, and had rode out on horseback a few minutes before our arrival. "Your son madam," continued papa smiling, "I do not ask for, as I had the pleasure of breakfasting with him this morning at Mr. Howard's, where I believe he is still to be found."

"At Mr. Howard's!!" exclaimed the Countess, and her daughter in a breath, "excuse me my dear Mrs. Howard," said the former, "but is your sister really a visitor at the Grove?"

Mrs. Howard answered in the affirmative, her countenance expressive of the surprise which this question occasioned her, and added; that your head-ach my dear Sophia, had alone prevented you the pleasure of accompanying us in this visit. I then thought it time to edge in a word, and turning to Lady Montreuil, I said that I

hoped you would continue at Glenmore as long as we, which I was led to suppose you would, unless you was spirited away before our return."

"And who are you afraid should run off with your friend?" enquired her ladyship smiling.

"Indeed my dear madam," I replied, "I dare not, in this company, hint where my suspicions rest."

"Why not?" said your sister, "I should like exceedingly to know to whom they allude, for excepting Lord Montreuil and my little boy, I know of no other male that we left behind us."

Here my father laughing said, "and are you sure the Earl has no inclinations of the kind to which Caroline alludes; you my dear Lady Montreuil," he added,

“cannot be surprized, should it even prove so.”

Her Ladyship became so agitated, that I saw my father was apprehensive lest he had gone too far; but Lady Grace rising and saying something in a low voice to her mother, soon restored her composure.

While the rest of the party were conversing, my attention was diverted by observing a gentleman with two females approaching the house. The window near which I was sitting being open, I leaned forwards to discover who they were, when I caught the eye of my brother, who smiled, and saying something to the younger of the ladies, she looked up, and smiled also, displaying a set of teeth, as white and even as your own, my dear Sophia. The acclamations of surprize which I uttered, drew my father to the window, and fixed the attention of almost all the persons in the room upon myself.

“Is not that your brother?” he said.

“It certainly is,” I replied.

“And our friends returned from their walk,” observed Lady Grace.

My father’s smiles gave me to understand that he was not so much in the dark as I was, and when Seymour entered with his companions, who really proved to be the Italians, he advanced to meet them, and taking a hand of each of the ladies expressed the pleasure which this introduction gave him.

On looking around to discover if the Countess was also in the secret, I perceived that she had retired with your sister to the further end of the apartment, and that they were engaged in earnest conversation. Mrs. Howard was of course introduced to the beautiful Laurina, who is really a fascinating little creature; and after having paid a most

unconscionable long visit, we at length departed, leaving my brother behind us. How long he has been acquainted with Lady Laurina, I cannot inform you, but very long it cannot be, as he was not more than three months in Italy. The Marchese we have just learned has been here in our absence, what, my dear Sophia, did you think of him?"

"I am unable to answer this question," Sophia returned, "for as it happened I never saw him."

"Not seen the Marchese!" cried her Ladyship. Where and how, then, have you passed your morning?"

"Principally in walking," she replied, blushing deeply.

"And may I enquire with whom?"

Indeed, my dear Sophia," said Lady Lucretia, "you must not indulge Caroline in answering her numerous interrogations, prompted merely by curiosity, besides it is time to think of dressing for dinner," saying this, she drew her incorrigible sister away, leaving Emily alone with Sophia, who by her desire, accurately described the persons of Lady Laurina and the Signora. Lord Edgell's attachment to the former was very evident she said, and from what she could learn, was not only returned by the young lady but approved of by her aunt.



Sophia, on joining the party at dinner, instantly saw from the arch looks directed towards her by Mr. Howard, that he was no longer ignorant of her engagement with his friend; and when he returned with his male guests to the drawing-room, he took

an opportunity of telling her how completely he had been deceived, in believing her to be perfectly indifferent to the young Earl, which he scarcely knew how to pardon ; then in the most friendly manner, he congratulated her upon her happy prospects, assuring her that she could not have given him a brother whom he should have loved half so well.

Mrs. Howard had before offered her congratulations on the same occasion, and George finding his sister was indeed the chosen partner of his almost idolized Lord d'Arcy, could not be restrained from expressing the joy he felt, so that several times he was obliged to be called to order in the course of the day, which he declared was the happiest of his life; and it was with difficulty that he was deterred from proceeding straight to d'Arcy castle, to express all the delight, which the knowledge of its owner's attachment to his sister afforded him.

Sophia hoped that her engagement to Lord Montreuil might, for some little time, be a secret to the Longueville family; but it was impossible for Mr Howard, to keep it from them; for, like George, he could not hide the pleasure which he derived from the knowledge of it; and she was happy to escape the congratulations that flowed in upon her from all quarters by retiring for the night.

Lady Grace, accompanied by her brother, called at the grove the next morning, and was received by all with pleasure, and with rapture by Sophia, who soon took an opportunity of conducting her to her own room, where her Ladyship again embracing her, entreated her pardon for having a single instance believed her capable of acting as Lord Deresford had induced them to believe she had done. Lady Grace then entered into many particulars of which her friend was ignorant: and Sophia now

learned that the late Earl had in his last illness, when he felt himself about to be translated into that world, where all distinction of rank would cease, given his full sanction to his son's marrying her, and at the same time expressed his earnest desire that their marriage might take place as soon as possible; providing Lord d'Arcy on his return to England, found her equally attached to him, as he had reason to suppose her to have been before he left the kingdom.

Lady Grace then adverted to the day on which Sophia and her brother had met at Mr. Cleveland's, where the happy *eclaircissement* had taken place; and mentioned the surprize she felt at Lord Edgell's making his appearance at the castle on the same morning, and the delight that shone in the fine eyes of the youthful Laurina on seeing him. "I began," she continued, "to suspect that the Englishman who had pre-

sented my young friend with the little gold heart, and Lord Edgell were one and the same person ; and for the first time began to have my doubts of the truth of that information which my cousin had given us relative to your engagement with his Lordship. Again I feared that the latter was trifling with the affections of two amiable young women, and notwithstanding my anger at your having, as I believed, my dear Sophia, treated my brother so ill, I felt exceedingly indignant towards Lord Edgell, for acting so despicable a part. I would not, however, mention my suspicions to my mother, who had already suffered much on his account and whose manner towards him throughout the day was chilling in the extreme ; indeed so much so, that it was scarcely possible that any thing could increase it.

Yesterday morning Lord Edgell made his appearance, and after breakfast accompanied Lady Laurina and her aunt in a

walk. On the evening before he had some conversation with the Marchese, and from what I saw, I was induced to believe, that you, my dear friend, were in danger of being forsaken : and I had fully determined upon putting the Signora on her guard, against this fickle young nobleman, when the Marquis of Longueville informed us that he had left Arthur very happy with you at Glenmore. My mother, scarcely able to conceal the emotion which this intelligence produced, by my advice, took your sister apart, and after apologizing for the question which she was about to put, entreated to know if you were really engaged to Lord Edgell.

Mrs. Howard appeared surprized at the enquiry, but instantly assuring my mother that there was not the slightest foundation for such a report, which she was aware had been circulated, and likewise, that you had told her that for some time you had suspected

that Lord Edgell was attached to some Lady abroad.

“ Not many minutes after your sister and party left the castle, Arthur returned, and his countenance plainly indicated to us that all was right within, and we were not long ignorant of the happy *eclaircissement* that had taken place between him and yourself. Lord Edgell, after this intelligence, had no longer reason to complain of our coolness towards him; and I am happy to add, there appears no impediment likely to arise, to prevent the happiness of him and Laurina.

Sophia now learned from Lady Grace, that Lord Edgell, or as he then called himself, Mr. Stanhope, had had letters of introduction from a gentleman in the mediterranean, to a family in Italy, where the Signora and her niece were on a visit. The former soon perceived that Laurina was

not indifferent to the young Englishman, who appeared much attached to her; and understanding that he was a man of family, and of exemplary morals, she hoped the Marchese who was partial to England, that he sometimes seriously thought of settling there, would have no objection to see his daughter the wife of her young favorite.

The Marchese was daily expected by the Signora; when a letter reached her from Mr. Stanhope, imparting the necessity there was for his immediate return to England, entreating her to excuse his personally taking leave of her and Lady Laurina, as he felt totally unequal to the task. The letter concluded with wishing them every happiness it was possible to meet with in this world, and invoking blessings upon them both.

“The Signora,” continued Lady Grace, “was much hurt at such conduct from one

whom she had every reason to esteem, and determined upon hiding from her brother, the hopes which she had permitted herself to indulge.

Lady Laurina wept when she heard of Mr. Stanhope's abrupt departure, but not having supposed for a moment, that he had regarded her with a warmer sentiment than that of friendship, she felt no anger towards him, and still hoped to see him again, which perhaps accounted in some measure for the joy she expressed, when the Marchese proposed accompanying us back to England."

When Lady Grace had concluded this little history, she mentioned her mother's hope of seeing Sophia at the castle before she returned with her family to Roseville: and then fearing her brother would be impatient at the length of time she had deprived him of her friend, proposed returning to

the drawing-room. As they were proceeding thither, Sophia enquired for the Marquis of Ormondry, and with pleasure learned that he was expected the next day by his fair mistress.

After sitting some time with Mrs. Howard, Lady Grace reminded her brother of the promise which she had given her mother not to make her visit too long; when Mrs. Howard perceiving his friend's reluctance to depart, said, if her Ladyship would accept him for her escort in the place of the Earl, he should prefer infinitely accompanying her, to riding to the castle with the Marquis as he had intended; and perhaps he added smiling, "Lord Montreuil will have no great objection to wait for the Marquis, who will not be ready to set off these two hours."

"To accommodate my friend, certainly not," returned the Earl smiling also, "and

therefore with the greatest pleasure imaginable, I will wait his Lordship's leisure."

"I am perfectly satisfied with this arrangement," said Lady Grace, "if you my dear Mrs. Howard have no objection to it."

"If I had any," she returned laughing, "I fear my good man would not attend to them, I shall therefore keep them to myself be they ever so weighty."

"Adieu then," cried her Ladyship affectionately pressing Mrs. Howard's hand, and then giving hers to that lady's husband to lead her to the carriage, she desired the Marquis to remind her brother how time passed, as if she suspected, he would want a *flapper* at his ear, she shook hands with Sophia and the rest of the party, and attended by Mr. Howard, drove from the door.

Lord Montreuil then persuaded Sophia to accompany him in a walk ; from which they were returning as they were met by Mr. Cleveland ; who hearing which way they had directed their steps came to meet them.

Mr. Cleveland had not seen Sophia since the evening of that day on which she and the Earl had come to an explanation ; and he now offered his congratulations to both, on every barrier being removed to their happiness ; and expressed the heartfelt joy it had occasioned him and his wife to hear it, the latter hoped to see her young friends again at the rectory, before Sophia returned to Melcombe.

This they both readily promised ; and the Earl being soon after summoned by the Marquis to attend him to the Castle, he, during his absence committed his fair

one to the care of his friend with whom she continued the walk. Sophia after walking some time longer with the worthy rector, returned with him to the house where he was induced by Mrs. Howard to spend the rest of the day.

The day the Marquis with his family returned to Longueville, Sophia accompanied her friends to the castle, where she was received with open arms by the Countess who, as she pressed her intended daughter to her bosom, returned her thanks, where they were most due, for this happy termination of her late anxieties.

The Marquis of Ormonsby was not the last to offer his congratulations to Sophia, and he now ventured to express his hope that Lady Grace would be prevailed upon to give him her hand on the same day that her brother and friend would be united.

Lord Montreuil undertook to plead his cause with his mother, which he did so successfully, that the Countess, after a little

hesitation, consented to part with her daughter some months sooner than she had intended.

Sophia remained at d'Arcy castle till her return to Melcombe with her family, where they were to be joined at the end of the month, by the Countess, her son and daughter, and Mr. Cleveland, whom the Earl had requested to perform the ceremony that would make Sophia his own.

The young Laurina with her father and aunt, removed to Longueville house a few days before the de Clairvilles returned home, she was charmed with the intended wife of Lord Montreuil, who equally pleased with her, had expressed a wish to see her with her family at Melcombe. Laurina smiling excused herself from visiting *Miss de Clairville*; but promised to pay her respects to Lady Montreuil at some future day.

Lord Edgell finding his regard for the young Italian, far exceeding what friendship alone could have inspired, and fearing to encourage an attachment to which he knew his father would be averse ; also Lady Laurina being, as he thought, a Catholic, he determined upon leaving Italy before his peace of mind and that of an amiable young woman's was irretrievably destroyed. Lady Laurina's manner was too artless not to betray her partiality for him: but as he had been extremely guarded at those times which accident had brought them together, that he trusted she had no reason to believe that he regarded her in any other light than that of a friend, and in a short time would forget that there was such a being in existence as himself. But how uncertain are the designs of lovers! The *heart* which Lord Edgell had ordered to be made, and in which he enclosed a lock of his hair; and the four little words that were engraved upon the back of it; and which

heart he sent to Lady Laurina the last day he remained at Naples, did but ill accord with his wish of her forgetting him.

After his return home, he more than once introduced before the Marquis, the subject of Catholic's and Protestants intermarrying: and invariably heard his father express his disapprobation of such marriages in the most decided terms:

It is possible that Sophia's powerful fascinations might have at length induced Lord Edgell to have transferred to her that regard which he had felt for the young Laurina, whom he never again expected to meet, had the affections of the former been disengaged; but having heard from Lady Lucretia of Lord d'Arcy's attachment, which he had every reason to believe was returned by Sophia, he accustomed himself to consider her only in the light of an amiable

and attractive female, for whom he soon felt a brother's affection.

The day preceeding that on which Sophia, was to return to Melcombe, and Lord Montreuil, with the Marquis was to proceed to town, in order to make necessary preparations for their nuptials; the families from the Grove, Hall, and Rectory dined at the castle. Mr. and Mrs. Deloraine accompanied the rector and his worthy wife and were not a small requisition to the party.

Ormsby Willoughby the day before had been hastily summoned home. His sister the amiable Barbary, had persuaded Capt. Champinette to take compassion on her, and on ten thousand pounds, which had lately been left her by an aunt, who judging from her niece's penurious habits believed her money would be safer with her, than with her father, whose generous spirit even his wife's illiberality could not

entirely check, was not such as pleased his sister. To Barbara, she therefore made over her property ; little thinking at the moment she was securing it to her, that either she herself should be taken off so suddenly, or that her money would in so short a time be transferred into the keeping of a dissipated and profligate young man, with whom her nephew, shocked at some instances that had reached him of his former friends depravity, had long since broken off all connection.

Elizabeth Davenport describing to Sophia that the state her daughter's elopement had induced Mrs. Willoughby to confess that she had never felt more surprize than when Ormsby communicated the contents of his father's letter to her. As from what she had seen of Miss Willoughby she should have thought her pride alone would have prevented her connecting herself as she had done; Capt. Champinette had nei-

ther family nor fortune to boast of, a good person and a commission in the army, were all his qualifications, and these had certainly not been overlooked by Barbara. “ She will soon, I fear, have reason to repent the imprudent step which she has taken, ” continued Elizabeth, “ and unless her father will consent to receive her again, she may in six months time find herself destitute of a home and an asylum.!!

Capt. Champinette’s passion for gaming was known to Sophia while in Town; and it was, she thought, but too probable that Miss Willoughby’s ten thousand pounds would be all devoted to that fashionable vice; and much as she had reason for disliking Barbara, she could not help feeling some pity for the misery which she had drawn upon herself.

Mrs. Willoughby had been almost continually in fits since the news of her daughter’s elopement had reached her; and little hope

was entertained of her recovery when Mr. Cleveland wrote to his son.

Elizabeth had scarcely finished her recital, when they were joined by Lord Montreuil, who pleasantly enquired if he might be permitted to accompany them in their stroll. This request being granted, he drew an arm of each of the ladies within his, and succeeded so well in entertaining them, that the Willoughby family were for a time forgotten by either. They returned to the house in great spirits, and proceeding to the saloon found all the company assembled.

Mrs. Aukland had requested Lady Grace to accompany her to the Battlements of the old castle, and so much was she charmed with the extensive view of the heavens which it presented to her view, that she expressed a desire of returning to the spot

at the close of the day, that she might have an opportunity to make her astronomical observations. As soon, therefore, as dinner was over she hastened thither; when to her great mortification a clouded sky had disappointed her expectation of admiring the rising stars.

As this was that the last evening the whole of the party were to remain together, they preferred conversation to either music or cards.

Emily with her father and Edward, intended to remain another week at Glenmore, whence they were to proceed to Woodly, where Sir Charles had wished his daughter's marriage to have been celebrated; but finding it was the wish of his Emily and Sophia that they should resign their liberty on the same day, he agreed to relinquish his desire of having the ceremony

performed at the Park, and promised to meet the Montreuil family at Melcombe at the end of the month.

At an early hour the Howards with their guests returned home, leaving Mr. and Mrs. de Clairville with George at the castle. The parting between Sophia and her sister, was an affecting one. The next time they met, the former would be the wife of Lord Montreuil, and Mrs. Howard promised, as it would not be in her power to be present at the ceremony, to meet her on her return to d'Arcy castle as the bride of its master.

Mr. Howard tenderly saluting her, desired her in a whisper, to be a very good girl, and not allow him to hear that she had shed a single tear on that day, that she was united to his friend. Sophia's tearful eyes did not, at that moment, give him much hope his advice would be attended to; and turning to,

the Earl he expressed his surprize that he could find any thing attractive in a being so inconstant as his sister, who one half hour was all smiles and dimples, and the next bearing every resemblance to a Niobe.

Lord Montreuil observing how much Sophia's parting with her sister had affected her, and apprehensive that the raillery of Mr. Howard would completely overset her, drew her away; but instead of re-conducting her to the saloon, he persuaded her to sit quietly with him in the library, where in half an hour they were joined by the Marquis and Lady Grace, and spent the evening in confidential discourse.

When Sophia retired to her room, a letter was delivered to her from Lady Caroline; which had been enclosed in one to Lady Montreuil from the Signora; but feeling very sleepy she deferred reading it

till the morning. The morning however found her again seated with the Earl in his library, who could not be prevailed upon to part with her, till his sister sent to inform them that she was waiting breakfast, and the next minute the carriage was at the door.

Lady Montreuil affectionately embracing Sophia, and whispering her hopes that when they next met, it would be to continue some time together, allowed her son, who had already taken his leave of her, to lead her to the carriage.

“When another month has passed,” cried the Marquis as the Barouche left the court, “we shall, I trust, meet again under the hospitable roof of Melcombe.”

“Would that it had been but a fortnight to that happy time!” said Lord Montreuil, as he returned to the breakfast room, where his mother and sister still remained.

“How ungrateful is this wish,” returned the Marquis. “A month back, and you would have gone down on your knees in gratitude, for the happy prospect of finding Sophia yours at the end of a twelvemonth.”

“You are right;” said the Countess, “and if Arthur repines at this short separation, he does not deserve the blessings which are now within his reach.”

“My dear mother,” replied the Earl, you shall not again have reason to accuse me of being ungrateful for the happy change in my prospects. The Marquis, and I are now hastening to London, and at our return you shall not hear me express one impatient murmur at the following fortnight passing away more than usually slow. But you must permit me to think of, and sometimes make Sophia the subject of conversation.”

“Agreed,” said Lady Montreuil smiling; “and more, you may read me every letter you receive from her.”

“I do not wish you to carry your complaisance quite so far,” returned the Earl laughing, “but will rest perfectly satisfied with the promise I have already obtained, of being allowed to speak of her.”

* * * * *

Sophia that evening in drawing out her handkerchief, brought with it Lady Caroline's letter; and blushing to think that she had entirely forgotten having received it, hastily broke the seal and read as follows.

“My dear Sophia will have no objection, I flatter myself, to learn how we are going on at Longueville, even should she be a little in want of entertainment at the old castle where, report says, there never before

were so many pair of true lovers met, as are at this time within its walls.

What a pity we cannot add a pair or two more, to those already to be found there. But my father is become so attached to the fascinating little Laurina, that nothing I think can induce him to part with her any more. It is a thousand pities Lucretia's heart is engaged, for had not that been the case, she might so charmingly have become a Marchesa. My father and the Signora (whom we might possibly induce to forget her late caro sposo,) Seymour and Lucretia and two other persons who shall be nameless, would have made as nice a quartetto party of cooing doves, as are to be met with in d'Arcy castle or its vicinity. But it appears that Lucretia still sighs after her Baronet; from whom, by-the-by, a letter has been received by my father, and by his calling my sister soon after into the library, from whence she returned all smiles and

blushes, I suspect Sir Henry has hopes of clearing off his mortgages, and has sent my father the pleasing information; at the same time expressing his intention, if agreeable to the former, of burdening himself with a wife.

“I cannot persuade Lucretia to give me her full confidence. She has acknowledged that the young Baronet is on his passage to England, and that it is not improbable he may on his arrival, spend some time with us.

Determined that Lucretia should not be married before her youngest sister, I permitted Mr. Cecil to apply for my father's consent to take me for better, for worse, etcetera, and after a great many closetings and numerous inquiries whether I really believed myself attached to Frederic Cecil Esq, the honorable youth was permitted to consider himself the intended spouse of the

right honorable Lady Caroline Selburne.

“ I will wait a moment for your congratulations on this happy event and then proceed.

“ My father is so happy in the prospect of having the little Laurina to reside with him entirely, (for Seymour has promised to take up his residence at Longueville,) that he seems quite reconciled to parting with his former spot: and it is determined, that Mr. Cecil is to convey me to his seat in Northamptonshire, as soon as the happy knot is tied. Lucretia has promised to accompany me thither, and Edgell is to bring his bride to pass the honey-moon with us.

The Marchese is looking out for a residence near Longueville, intending to reside half the year in England, and has pressed us all to be of the party when he returns to Italy.

Lady Caroline concluded her letter with requesting to hear often from Sophia, and expressing her hope of seeing Lord and *Lady* Montreuil the following spring in Northamptonshire.

Sophia read aloud part of this letter to her father and mother, who were much amused with the cool manner in which Lady Caroline had announced her intended marriage.

Mr. Cecil was a favorite with them all, and they united in thinking her Ladyship was fortunate in having attached so estimable a character.

Lady Lucretia's happy prospects afforded them also the greatest pleasure ; and George being much diverted at learning that there were three weddings in agitation at Longueville as well as at Melcombe, declared if the Signora had been a few years

younger, he would have entreated her to take compassion upon him, the only one of the party that remained unmated.

His mother laughing, told him it was rather too early for him to think of taking a wife, but expressed her hope that when he did make his election, the daughter he presented to her might be in every respect like the woman which his brother had chosen.

CHAP. X.



The morning after their return to Melcombe, the De Clairvilles' were agreeably surprized by the appearance of Major and Mrs. Singleton, who had been some days at Ashmore ; and hearing of the expected arrival of the family, had taken the earliest opportunity of calling upon them.

Charlotte was not long allowed to remain ignorant of the happiness that awaited her friend in her union with her

favorite d'Arcy, now Lord Montreuil. Mrs. Singleton warmly congratulated Sophia upon it, but lamented the impossibility of her being present at her wedding, as the time fixed for it, was that when she expected to be confined. "If I am able to come to you;" she continued, "depend, Sophia, upon seeing me among you, I may not possibly be the best representative of a bridesmaid, but setting that aside I shall enact my part nobly."

Sophia affectionately embracing her friend, assured her, that nothing would give her greater pleasure than to have her with her at the time she alluded to; which she confessed to look forward to with some degree of awe. She then enquired for Eliza, and heard that she was at that time visiting a sister of Colonel Marsden's; "You would not know her again," continued Mrs. Singleton; Eliza is now as pleasant an unaffected girl, as can any where be

met with. Do you remember my mother thinking her eldest daughter had been so long indulged in giving way to affection, that it had become in her a second nature? She now confesses herself agreeably mistaken, and says, no one can henceforth persuade herto believe that there is such a thing in existence as a *natural affectation*."

Sophia heard that Mr. Singleton was with his son and daughter at Ashmore, all anxiety to see her. To her inquiry why he had not accompanied them that morning to Melcombe, Charlotte answered, he thought his presence might be a constraint upon them after so long an absence, but that it was his intention to ride over the the lodge the following morning, "and when he hears from me," she added, "the footing which you and Lord Montreuil are at this time upon, I fear his joy will almost overpower his reason."

Charlotte then begged to learn what had become of the unfortunate Viscount, and understanding that he was at Paris, where he had been joined by his sisters, she exclaimed; “where I trust he will regain his spirits, but I confess I am very happy he is so far removed out of your way.”

Sophia requested to be made acquainted with her reasons for rejoicing so much at his absence. “You did not, I hope, my dear Charlotte,” she continued, “fear in him a rival to his cousin?”

Mrs. Singleton said it would be the greatest absurdity to harbour such an idea a moment; and at length acknowledged that she merely wished Lord Deresford’s absence, from recollecting the torment he was to her when he visited them in the spring. By the way she continued “have you heard Emily’s quondam admirer, the

redoubtable Mr. Leigh, has paid extravagantly dear for the attentions lavished upon him by Lord Williams. "It is said, that the latter has had immense sums of money from him, which there is little chance of his ever seeing again ; as Lord William's affairs are in so embarrassed a state, that is scarcely possible they should be retrieved. His eldest brother has been at length obliged to cast him off, which in a wordly sense it might have been better for the Duke had he done it some years ago. He heard of the intimacy subsisting between his brother and the little banker, and endeavoured to put the latter on his guard, against the *swindling* Lord Williams. But Mr. Leigh felt too much gratified by the eclat which he supposed his intimacy with a Duke's brother gave him to permit his believing any thing to the discredit of his dear friend, and *dear* I believe he has been to the little man in more senses than one.

The elder Leigh is so enraged with his son for having squandered away so much money, a greater part of which could scarcely be called his own, that he has erased his name from the firm, and merely allows him a bare competence. Clement says it is pitiable to meet his crest-fallen acquaintance, who is no longer to be seen in Bond Street, or dashing through the other fashionable ones in his different vehicles ; in short he is fallen too low, for even Charlotte Singleton to amuse herself with laughing at his absurdities."

Sophia expressed some compassion for the punishment his egregious vanity had brought upon him, but which she hoped would entirely cure him of his follies. Mrs. Singleton shaking her head said "she doubted it very much, as his excessive conceit was too innate for any hopes to be entertained of its ever deserting him."

Charlotte and her husband were prevailed upon to remain at Melcombe that day, and the next brought the Major's worthy father, who expressing his pleasure at seeing Sophia looking so well, archly enquired whether this was to be attributed to the air of Melcombe, or that in the vicinity of d'Arcy castle.

“To both,” she returned smiling, though blushing a little. “I have been all my life so much accustomed to country air and exercise, that it is not very surprizing the smoke of London did not agree with me, or that I should recover my former colour when I again returned to a clearer atmosphere.”

“I am exceedingly sorry to hear the air of London disagrees so much with you;” said Mr. Singleton, as I am afraid you will find that in the environs of — square

equally deleterious with that in Seymour street, and we must expect to see you this winter with the same colourless cheeks we parted from you with in the spring. ”

Sophia again blushing, endeavoured to turn her old friend's attention to other subjects, and for this purpose enquired for his sister the dowager Lady Singleton.

“She is well as can be expected;” he replied laughing after having quarrelled with her sweet Mrs. Montgomery.

“I am sorry to hear this;” returned Sophia. “What can possibly have occasioned this breach.”

“The children entirely. My good sister finding Master Charles more troublesome one day than usual, was not satisfied with reading him a lecture on the account, but committed the heinous offence of send-

ing him from the room. Her amiable friend, hearing the young gentleman crying, hastened to learn the occasion of his tears, and finding they had been caused by Lady Singleton's sending him from her disgrace to the nursery. Mrs. Montgomery instantly returned to the apartment where she had left her Ladyship, and in somewhat an authoritative voice inquired what Charles had done to deserve such a punishment. My sister endeavoured to excuse herself for the harsh measures she had pursued by recounting the fault her son had been guilty of. But Mamma was not to be appeased; and the dowager, no longer able to restrain her temper, plainly told her charming friend, that her children were considered by all that visited in Portland place, such intolerable nuisances, that she had heard Lady B. and Sir Hillary Bellingham declare if Mrs. Montgomery did not either keep them in better order, or not allow her friends to be

annoyed with them in the dining, or drawing room, she would find it impossible to fill her table for the future, or expect to be visited by any but *toad eaters* or the *mob-lesse*.

“Mrs. Montgomery answered this attack, by observing her friends and *toad eaters* might please themselves; indeed every one who thought in this manner she never wished to see again in Portland place, and advised her Ladyship for the future to desist from visiting where such *annoyance* were to be met with.

“My sister rose in a violent fury and not allowing the carriage to be called, almost instantly quitted the house. She wrote to me the next day, and her invectives against her late friend were more bitter than I would wish to repeat.”

Mr. Singleton then mentioned his nep-

hew's expected return. "Harry is a good lad" he added and I earnestly hope my sister will learn to value such a son, as he deserves to be valued."

As it was impossible for Sophia to pay her promised visit to Ellen and her husband, they volunteered spending a little time at Melcombe before the former left it. Charles had lately been presented to a very fine living; whither he soon intended removing. Ellen looked better in health than her friends had ever seen her; she was idolized by her husband, and beloved by every member of his family.

Mrs. Charles Warburton was not prepared to hear of her sister's intended marriage with Lord Montreuil; as she had always believed Lord Deresford, (whose attachment, to Sophia, she was perfectly aware of,) was to be her brother. Lord d'Arcy had been her greatest favorite; but

having heard that he was an engaged man before he made his appearance amongst them, it had never occurred to her, that Sophia considered him in any other light, than an agreeable young man, from whose society she derived both pleasure and instruction.

Sophia and her sister again passed their morning's in the *sanctum*, as it began to be too cold for their favorite apartment in the dairy.

The time was fast approaching when the Montreuil and Rushbrook families were to assemble at Melcombe; Mrs. Singleton and her husband, had been staying the last few days at the Lodge : and Charlotte with her young friends were in the *sanctum*, deeply engaged in their several pursuits, when steps were heard approaching, and the next minute Mrs. De Clairville making her appearance smiling,

inquired if they would admit another intruder.

“Willingly,” answered Sophia, “if it is the Major?”

“And *most unwillingly* if it should prove an Earl,” returned her mother still smiling.

“An Earl,” she repeated, “I know of no Earl but one, who would presume to crave admittance within these hallowed walls, and he will not be here these three days.

“It is his *wraith* then,” exclaimed Charlotte as she started up to welcome Lord Montreuil who at that moment she discovered leaning against the entrance.

Sophia perhaps did not feel less delight.

at seeing him there than her friend, notwithstanding that she did not fly to meet him with open arms, as she afterwards told Mrs. Singleton, she had observed her to do: and after the delightful bustle which the Earl's unexpected entrance occasioned had a little subsided, she enquired the reason of his making his appearance at the Lodge so much sooner than he was expected.

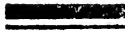
He answered that thinking the Marquis of Ormondsby a sufficient escort for his mother and sister, he saw no necessity for his remaining any longer away from Melcombe; and having obtained Lady Montreuil's permission to precede them, he had made the best of his way into ——shire.

Charlotte and Ellen soon after finding something to call them away, left the lovers to a *tete a tete*, and Lord Montreuil would not allow Sophia to make her escape till she had confessed his unexpected ap-

pearance was far from being unwelcome to her.

Sophia had not forgotten her promise of paying little William a visit after her return to Melcombe, when she had the pleasure of finding his mother sufficiently recovered to do for her family as formerly. Lord Montreuil accompanied her frequently to the cottage and was so much pleased with its inhabitants that he offered the gardner's place at d'Arcy castle, at that time vacant at Ashley; the offer was accepted with the greatest gratitude, and with the most unfeigned delight by his wife, when it was understood that her dear young lady would then become her mistress.

CHAP. XI.



On the morning of that day which Lord Montreuil expected his mother to arrive, as he and Sophia were riding near Delemere Abbey, they were met by Mr. Fitzarthur, who, with his family, had arrived there on the evening before.

The papers had announced to them the intended marriage of the Earl with the beautiful and accomplished Miss De Clairville; and Mr. Fitzarthur now requested

permission to offer his congratulations on the occasion, expressing, at the same time, his hope that they would not pass the Abbey gates without turning in to take some refreshment.

Lord Montreuil and his companion would have excused themselves; but at that moment Mrs. Fitzarthur with her youngest daughter, who had been walking in the park, approached the paling: and recognizing the young Earl and Sophia in the lady and gentleman with whom Mr. Fitzarthur was conversing, they united their entreaties with Mr. Fitzarthur, to induce them to rest awhile at the Abbey; so that, in despite of themselves they were obliged to yield acquiescence, and proceed with Mr. Fitzarthur to the house, while Mrs. Fitzarthur and Louisa hastened thither by a nearer way.

Miss Fitzarthur hearing who was arriv-

ed, and anxious to observe how Sophia would conduct herself on the eve of becoming a Countess, hastened to join the party in the drawing-room.

“Where is Lord Edgell?” she inquired of Sophia, after having expressed the pleasure it had given her to hear of the conquest she had made while at Glenmore. “Poor man! he little supposed that when Mr. Howard came to Longueville on purpose to take you from thence, it was to meet his rival. Had he been aware of that, I suspect he would not so patiently have permitted your accompanying your brother home.”

“I am happy in being able to quiet your apprehensions on Lord Edgell’s account,” said Sophia, smiling. “For it was only yesterday that I received a letter from his sister, informing me that his lordship was married two days ago to a lady,

to whom he has been some time much attached."

Indeed! are you serious?

"Never more so, believe me."

"Did you know madam," said Miss Fitzarthur to her mother, "that Lord Edgell was married?"

"Your father informed me this morning and I think, my dear, you said "turning to her husband, "Lady Caroline was married the same day as her brother."

"So the papers declared this morning," answered Mr. Fitzarthur, "but Miss De Clairville possibly knows more of this than any one."

Sophia repeated what she had told Miss Fitzarthur, and by their desire described the person of the lady with whom Lord Edgell was united.

Miss Fitzarthur despairing of being able to rouse the jealousy of the Earl, which she had charitably intended to do ; continued some time silent, this gave her sister an opportunity of questioning Sophia upon the establishment of the new pair ; but the latter professing herself entirely ignorant of the number or variety of their different carriages, servants *etcetera* ; and Louisa not daring to make any inquiries relative to her own, changed the conversation. Soon after, Lord Montreuil, by Sophia's desire ordered their horses ; and after receiving the farewell compliments of the Fitzarthur family, who gave them to understand that they did not expect to see *Miss De Clairville* again, they took their leave, not a little rejoiced at finding themselves without the park gates of Delemere Abbey.

On the same evening the Woodly and Montreuil party arrived at Melcombe, and

great was the joy expressed by all at the meeting, particularly by the Marquis of Ormsby, whose spirits were more than usually exhilarated.

Captain Rushbrook soon after made one in this happy circle, and increased the general joy. Mr. Cleveland was entrusted with a letter from Elizabeth Davenport to Sophia, which was written immediately upon the receipt of one from Ormsby Willoughby. His mother died the second day after his arrival. A few hours before her death, her senses had returned, and she recognized her son; but her daughter's name never passed her lips, and fearful of a return of her fits, Mr. Willoughby, who was little aware his wife's death was so near, would not permit himself or Ormsby to breathe it before her.

Miss Willoughby, or rather Mrs. Champinette, had been seen at —— where

she, and her husband embarked for France, but no letter had been yet received from either. Young Willoughby, had persuaded his father, after the funeral of his mother, to accompany him on his return to L. where Mrs. Henry Ainsley met them and assisted Elizabeth, and her mother in endeavouring to reconcile Mr. Willoughby to a world which he had become desirous of quitting. Elizabeth added, his spirits were already much recovered, and they had every reason to hope that he would hold out the olive branch to his poor deluded child, if she expressed any desire for a reconciliation.

The happy party at Melcombe did not separate till the day Mr. Cleveland was called upon to give his blessings at the altar to these deserving pair. Immediately after the ceremony, which in respect to the memory of the late Lord Montreuil, and to the feelings of his widow, was per-

formed as privately as possible, the young Earl, with his bride and mother, left Melcombe for d'Arcy castle : and at the same time the Marquis and Marchioness of Ormonsby departed for their seat in Buckinghamshire, leaving Edward and Emily at the Lodge.

Had Mr. Howard been present at the parting between Sophia and her mother, he would have chidden the latter for having attended so ill to his lecture ; but happily when he saw her at the castle, whither he and Mrs. Howard hastened the second day to welcome their sister's arrival, smiles and dimples, were alone visible on the countenance of the bride. Little Charles, who had accompanied his father and mother in their visit of congratulation to the Earl and Countess, expressed all the joy, his little heart was full of, on finding aunt Sophy was going to live with his dear Arthur, and it was with some difficulty he could be

prevailed upon to leave the castle to return to Glenmore.

The dowager Lady Montreuil had soon the happiness of again embracing her daughter, who with the Marquis passed their Christmas at d'Arcy castle. Sophia and her husband called often at the rectory, and seldom left it without visiting the summer house, the scene of their reconciliation.

In the beginning of the spring the young Countess accompanied the Earl to London, where she was met by her friend Charlotte, who delightedly introduced her to her little boy.

Eliza Warburton, now Mrs. Marsden, was visiting her sister in Seymour Street: the Colonel had resigned his commission, and lived entirely on his estate, a part of which he amused himself with, by his own

cultivation. Eliza expressed much pleasure at meeting with her former friend, to whom she some time after acknowledged herself indebted for securing the affections of the Colonel, as it was by taking her for her model, that she had affected this.

Lord Montreuil, who was present when Eliza made this confession, said, "and would many of our modern dames follow your example, my dear Mrs. Marsden, and copy the virtues of my Sophia, in the character of a wife, we should not so frequently hear of those domestic contentions, and discordant unions which disturb the peace, and mar the happiness of many a family.

"I must not allow you, my dear Arthur," said the countess, "to attribute the cause of so many unhappy marriages entirely to the misconduct of our sex. Were all husbands as attentive to their wives as you are

it would be impossible for them not to feel, what I experience for you. An affection which is grounded upon esteem, and strengthened by gratitude can never decay.

Lord Montreuil forgetful of the presence of a third person, pressing his beloved Sophia to his breast, said, “the man who is possessed of such a treasure as you, my beloved Sophia, are to your husband, must be blessed indeed.”

“I hope,” said the Countess, smiling and blushing from a mixed sensation of confusion at Eliza’s presence, and delight at the Earl’s eulogium, “there are many such, our friend Colonel Marsden for instance.”

“It shall, at least, be my study to persuade him, that the wife whom he has selected, is such,” returned Eliza smilingly as she arose to return to Seymour Street.

“ Yet I perfectly agree with his Lordship, in believing it scarcely to be possible that the treasure which he has in you, my dear Lady Montreuil, is often to be met with.”

Lord and Lady Montreuil each taking a hand of Mrs. Marsden, the former said, “ Your husband is, I know, aware of the happy lot which he has drawn. And you will believe that at the moment when I was speaking, your sister, and two or three of our other friends were not thought on by me : but they must not no longer be forgotten ; and I earnestly hope, that before the conclusion of this year, to see these worthy and beloved friends all assembled at d’Arcy castle.”

On returning home, Mrs. Marsden related to her sister the scene that had been passing, when Mrs. Singleton laughing, said, “ it is seldom, indeed, we hear in

these days we hear of four such matchless pairs as have lately met at Hymen's altar. I hope to make one of the party at the castle, in order that I may witness so very novel a sight, as that of four married couple who have selected their partners in life for the virtues which each individually possessed; instead of the length of their respective rent rolls.

“ And at *d'Arcy* castle alone, I believe are to be found such an assemblage of happy pairs,” observed Mr. Monthermur, who was present.

“ I heartily wish, my dear friend,” said major Singleton, “ that you would accompany us when we direct our steps thither; who knows but you may find some Emily, Lady Grace, or Sophia, to make you as happy, as they do their respective Lords.

“ No,” he returned; “ I feel that to

be highly improbable; and until I can meet with a second Lady Montreuil, I will not venture within its walls. Why man, I should be ready to cut my throat, at finding myself the only solitary being of the party."

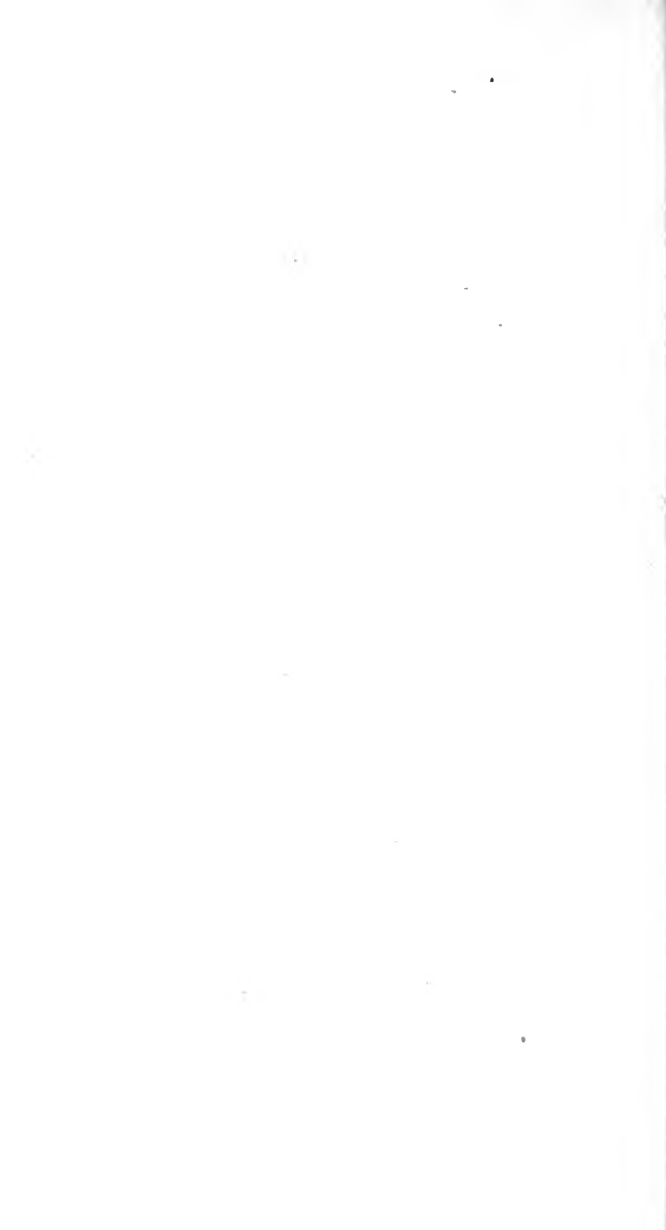
Mr. Monthermur kept his word nor went near d'Arcy castle till he carried thither a beautiful and amiable young woman whom he had induced to become his wife.

FINIS.











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